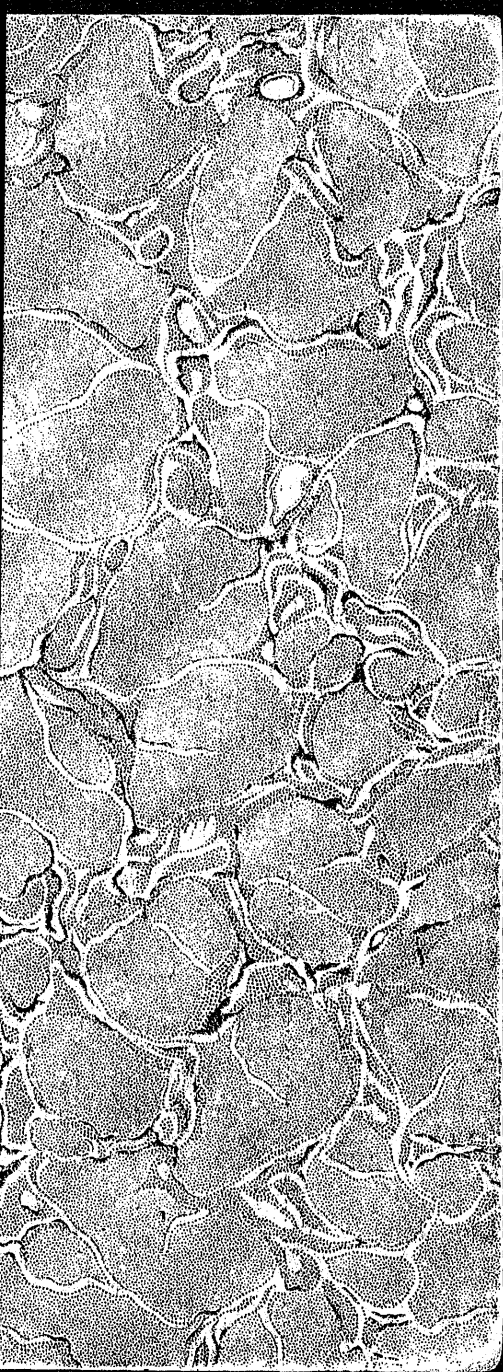


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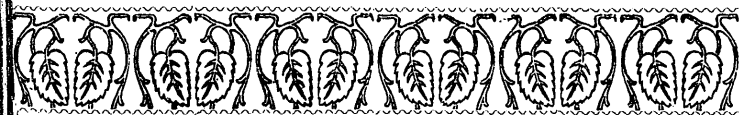
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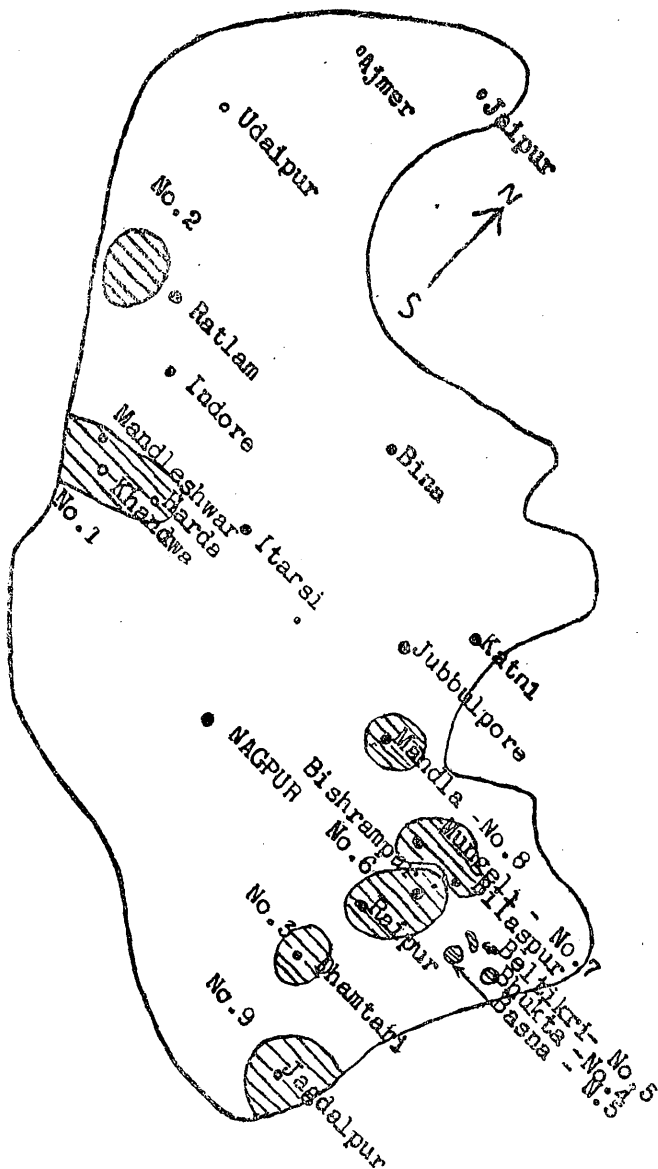
CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MID INDIA

*A Study of Nine Areas
With Special Reference To
Mass Movements*

BY
BISHOP J. W. PICKETT
DR. D. A. MCGAVRAN
REV. G. H. SINGH



THE TERRITORY OF THE MID INDIA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL



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REV. D. A. MCGAVRAN, Ph. D.
REV. G. H. SINGH, M. A.

FOREWORD BY JOHN R. MOTT

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For favour of Review and
with the compliments of
D. A. McGowan

CHAPTER I

THE BACK-GROUND OF

BY
D. A. McGavran

Mid India, the area served by the Council, is a territory comprising Central India and Rajputana. It is long and four hundred miles wide Jaipur in the northwest to Jagd southeast, and from Katni on the the southwest. There are five hundred workers of missionary status in the missions of the area have an average years.

The Christian community constant Church numbers about 58,000 the area listed in the Directory of rate of increase for 1921-31 average normal birth rate. In 11 stations averaged 200% and indicated that the healthily through adult conversions stations are for the most part reflect the general impression abroad in decade was that the growth of the necessarily be very slow. At the J mission, a speaker said, "During our existence fourteen Churches During the next fifty years we will be established." His statement rather optimistic one, made in the moment.

Then early in 1933 came the Mass Movements in India. In Mid ately recognized as of epochal importance.

PTER I

ND OF THIS STUDY

BY

McGavran

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kind of church growth of which Mid India knew nothing, and proved that this kind of church growth was valid. Bishop, then Dr., J. W. Pickett, the author, was invited to speak at the 1934 meeting of the Mid India Christian Council. To people convinced that Christianization is a long slow and very difficult process, Dr. Pickett's accounts of the triumphs of the Gospel and of its redemptive power in areas where people had accepted it in the mass movement way were thrilling. Bishop Lapp rose and asked in an impassioned way, "Dr. Pickett why does not that sort of thing happen here?" The matter was felt to be of primary importance. A strong and representative committee of twenty-four of the Christian leaders of the area was appointed to study the matter still further and to arrange a four day Retreat at which the entire subject of Mass Movements and their relationship to the Christian Churches and Missions of Mid India could be thoroughly considered.

This Retreat was held at Chhindwara in the spring of 1934 with Dr. Pickett and Mr. Ingram present as the principal speakers. As the meeting progressed there came an understanding of the fact that while for the most part Mid-India was a sterile area, still there were occurring and had occurred numerous group movements very similar in nature to the group movements which 70 years ago led to the establishments of the great Churches in Chhota Nagpur, and the Andhra Country. It was realized that many of these God given opportunities were being lost through a failure to understand them. Out of the four days of conference and prayer came the conviction that God willed great ingathering in Mid-India and that a study of typical Christian Missions from the point of view of mass movements was absolutely essential. The National Christian Council was asked for two months of Dr. Pickett's time, and plans were laid for the mass movement survey of Mid India. Churches and Missions responded very favourably to the appeal for funds to undergird this survey. Practically all the Missions and many of the Churches sent in contributions, the total raised being 1421 rupees. Dr. McGavran and Rev. G. H. Singh were appointed as helpers of Dr. Pickett.

Two kinds of areas were selected for study. First those in which a group movement was in progress. Second those in which there was hope that a group movement might be induced were a special effort to be made. The purpose was not to make a survey of existing mass movements, but to make a study of the work of Churches and Missions with special reference to opportunities for mass movements. The Survey Party found itself continually concerned with questions such as how and why mass movements start, how they may be arrested and die, what mission procedures conduce to sterility, what procedures make small beginning movements flourish, and the like.

The field work began at Harda C. P. on the evening of the 13th of January 1936 and continued without interruption until the finish at Champa C. P. on the 18th of February. During these thirty-eight days we carefully studied the Church and Mission opportunities in and around the following Mission Stations: Harda, C. P., Khandwa, C. P., Mandleshwar, C. I., Ratlam, C. I., Dhamtari, C. P., Bhukta, Orissa, Basna, Birra-Beltikri, Raipur, Bishrampur, Baitalpur, Mungeli, Takhatpur, Fosterpur and Bilaspur, C. P. Dr. McGavran, later on and alone, made a four day study of the work at Jagdalpur in Bastar State and another four day study of the work in the Mandla District, which studies are also recorded here. We were thus brought into touch with the work of the following Churches and Missions mentioned in the chronological order of our first contacts with them: The India Mission of the Disciples of Christ, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the United Church of North India and the United Church of Canada Mission, the American Mennonite Mission, the Evangelical Synod of North America, the General Conference Mennonite Mission and the Church Missionary Society.

At all but one of the stations mentioned conferences with the employed staff, Indian and non-Indian, and with representative Church members added to our understanding of the present position and the process by which it evolved. Larger conferences, held at Rasalpura Mhow for the

western section of the field studied, and at Champa for the eastern section, enabled us to supplement the information gathered from field study and to test our first tentative conclusions by submitting them to the judgement of Christian men and women from a wide territory surrounding the areas we had visited.

The territories visited will be dealt with in this report primarily according to the caste or castes within which the opportunity for group movements has been indicated. The frontispiece is a map of the Mid-India territory showing the principal cities of the area and the sections visited. If turned so that the writing is horizontal, the map will be oriented north and south.

Note: Though Bishop Pickett has demurred at the references in this introduction and later in the book to the revolutionary changes in thinking which "Christian Mass Movements in India" has produced and is producing, we his colleagues in the publication of this study of Mid India, who are resident in and know Mid India, have felt that we must of necessity include them. They accurately depict the change of thought which occurred in Mid India. Without "Christian Mass Movements in India" there would have been no change in outlook, no revival of hope, no girding of the loins for advance, and no mass movement survey of Mid India. These references are essential to a correct understanding of the situation.

CHAPTER II

AMONG THE BALAHIS OF NIMAR

Nimar is area number one on the map. It includes the Mission Stations of Harda, Khandwa and Mandle-shwar. From the standpoint of Christian Missions the distinctive feature of Nimar is the responsiveness of people of the Balahi caste to Christianity.

The Balahis are a depressed people upon whom Hinduism has laid a very cruel hand. They are labourers, weavers, and village watchmen. In Nimar, including both the Central India and the Central Provinces sections of Nimar, their numbers approach a hundred and fifty thousand. By origin they seem to be an occupational group, probably an off-shoot of the large Kori caste of weavers, one of whose sub-divisions in the United Provinces is the Balahi. It appears that in the Central Provinces they have received accretions from the spinner caste of Katias, themselves probably a branch of the Koris, and from the Mahars, the great menial caste of the Bombay Presidency. The Balahis are reputed to be the oldest residents of Nimar, a belief which accords with the theory that the "Untouchables" of today are descendents of the original inhabitants of the land, who were enslaved by the conquering Aryan immigrants.

Many disabilities are imposed upon the Balahis. They are denied the use of village wells. The temples are closed against them. The village barber will neither shave them nor cut their hair. The tailor will make clothes for them only if he be permitted to take the cloth directly from the merchant, and the washerman will wash for them only if the clothes be brought to the edge of the river or tank and dipped in the water before they are delivered to him. Until recently their children were uniformly excluded from the village schools and even now the right of admission is more theoretical than factual.

Not long since they were compelled to wear an earthen spittoon suspended from their necks, lest they defile the ground with their spittle, and a broom hung from their backs to erase the imprint of their feet, lest some caste Hindu walk thereon and be contaminated. Economic exploitation has been as ruthless as social oppression. For the most part they live always in dire poverty, chronically undernourished. Hunger has made them depend for common diet upon scraps of food discarded by their neighbours and for feasts upon carcases of beasts or fowls that disease, old age or other cause may have laid down in their way. For garments they remove the cloth from corpses at the burning ghat.

Worse in its effects than the imposing of social disabilities and economic exploitation has been the concept of Karma by which they have been influenced to regard themselves as a worthless, degraded people. Scars and distortions of personality have resulted from these impacts of Hinduism, but evidence of stern stuff in the Balahi heritage abounds, for they have withstood generations of mistreatment without the loss of potentialities. Masses regard their shame and degradation as inevitable and ordained of God but thousands have responded to the preaching of the Gospel by evincing faith and hope, and in hundreds of homes the Gospel has begun to effect liberation of spirit, reconstruction of personality and transformation of character.

HARDA

In and around Harda few Balahis have been converted and no convert has remained in his village. For some fifty years the Disciples' Mission occupied Harda in force, maintaining a high school, several primary schools, a hostel for Christian boys and a hospital. The boys in the hostel were imported from other districts, alone or with parents who worked for the Mission. Evangelists preached in the villages for a dozen miles or more around Harda, but made no concerted or sustained effort to reach the Balahis. They preached to all castes as they found opportunity and made no effort to concentrate upon the

Balahis as an interested caste within which group decisions to follow Christ might be expected. Converts were so few in numbers that when in 1929 a program of concentration was necessitated by shortage of finance the Mission closed its institutions in Harda and withdrew, leaving only one Indian pastor who serves a small congregation from which he receives a small part of his support.

With the new interest in and understanding of mass movements, the pastor at Harda has become specially interested in the Balahis. Supported by several educated young men of his congregation he has presented the Gospel to groups of the Balahis in visits to their homes as well as in public preaching. The response has been heartening. Two influential headmen have revealed themselves as having been greatly influenced by Christianity before this approach to them. The father of one of them was for years before his death a secret believer. Entire groups are favorable to Christianity and a deep spiritual hunger seems to be very common within the caste over the entire area.

KHANDWA

Sixty-four miles southwest of Harda, where our study in the Nimar territory began, lies Khandwa, in and around which are thirty-seven hundred Christians associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. These Christians are nearly, but not quite, all recruited from the Balahi caste. Their accession to Christianity has been wholly typical of the group process which has produced the great Christian populations of South Travancore, Tinnevely, Andhra-Desh, Chhota Nagpur, the Punjab, etc., except for the one feature that they began to turn to Christ as a result of the purposeful concentration upon them selected as a caste which was likely to be responsive to the Gospel.

The history of the work at Khandwa is replete with important lessons. Bishop James M. Thoburn, who was one of the first serious students of mass movements in North India, selected the Balahis as a people who

would probably hear the Gospel gladly, and advised the ministers under his supervision at Khandwa to work specially for their conversion. Likewise Bishop Thoburn, understanding the disposition of India's village people to act in groups, and recognizing the validity of group action in religion, recommended that the approach be made not to individuals for solitary action but to families and groups of families for joint decision. The movement quickly followed.

We have not been able to procure statistical reports earlier than 1915. The following analysis of records since that time is instructive :

Protestant Christian Community :	1915.....	1173
	1921.....	3323
	1925.....	2667
	1930.....	2895
	1934.....	3309
	1935.....	3779

An untoward development early in the history of the movement at Khandwa was the coming of the Roman Catholics. On arrival they entered immediately into aggressive competition for the control of the new converts. This has heavily handicapped the effort to build Christian character and experience. Rather than initiate new work of their own even under the favorable conditions resulting from the success of the Methodists, the Roman Catholics have spent their energies in trying to draw Christians away from the Church in which they were converted. The ill effects of their aggression have been most serious in relation to discipline, but have extended to every aspect of congregational and personal life and experience.

Another drag was placed upon progress by the unanticipated effects of famine relief administered in the years 1897-1900 inclusive. The converts learned to expect financial help in times of difficulty, and ministers of the Church, learning to think of themselves as dispensers of charity, lifted from the Church the burdens necessary for the development of its strength.

A third interference with the normal development of the Church has been the acceptance of low standards of expectation, probably imported from the North, concerning the adoption by new converts of Christian ways of life, especially in regard to worship programmes and social conventions. Ordinarily worship services have been held only when a salaried man, drawing his support almost entirely from sources outside of the District, was present. The local Christians have ordinarily participated in worship only in singing; and so far as we could discover, their interest in that and other parts of the service has been half-hearted. The marriage customs of the unconverted Balahis have been followed by the converts, unmodified except, perhaps, by the elimination of their more blatantly idolatrous features. Child marriage has not been appreciably reduced. We were unable to learn of a single marriage of village Christians by Christian rites except in families drawing salaries from the Church and we met one ex-preacher who had recently arranged the marriage of his minor daughter by non-Christian rites.

Despite these several handicaps the Christian movement has advanced considerably and has to its credit some very worthwhile achievements. During the year preceding our visit no fewer than 520 new converts were baptized, and we found everywhere we went a confident belief that a new era of numerical advance and qualitative improvement had begun. We believe that there are solid grounds for such confidence. The Balahis are certainly waking up. They will not continue in the state to which Hindu teaching and oppression have reduced them. They will not tolerate the continued denial of the implications of their manhood. There is among them a widespread recognition that Christianity offers a way of salvation, and that no other way is open. Among Christians in the district we found extensive evidence of a desire to improve the quality of their Christian discipleship. A semi-literate Christian, converted as a young man thirty years ago said "We are just now learning that it is a mistake to be half-way Christians. We have lost most of what God offered us because we

have not been fully Christian." The superintendent, the Rev. Salabat Phillip, an experienced Indian minister, evinced acquaintance with the main lessons of the Mass Movement study and eagerness to apply them to the situation within the District.

MANDLESHWAR

Across the border in Central India, fifty miles north-west of Khandwa, is Mandleshwar, a mission station of the United Church of Canada Mission, opened in 1930. A few Balahis were converted in the neighbourhood of this town more than forty years ago. Until the station was opened converts were ministered to only through the irregular touring of ministers or lay-missionaries from Indore. At times they saw no minister for more than a year. Their spiritual life suffered and their children grew up with very little Christian knowledge or influence. Some of the children were married to non-Christians and came to count themselves Hindus.

From about 1925 to 1930 there was a slight quickening of interest with a small number of conversions from the Balahis and the Dolis. This led to the establishment in 1930 of a mission station there in charge of the Rev. T. Buchanan. The policy adopted has been the intensive working of the most accessible portion of the field, a strip of territory 10 miles wide and 40 miles long just north of the Narbadda river. As a result there has been a steady, though not very large, increase in the Christian community.

Though there were converts from other castes in former years the active Church now consists very largely of converts from the Balahis. (One of the hopeful aspects of the situation is, however, the movement amongst the Chamars.) In contrast to those about Khandwa these have been won, not in entire village groups but one or two or three families at a time. The community at the time of our visit numbered 600, of whom 212 were baptised in 1935 and 12 in 1934. Two observations struck us with great force: first, that the village converts had understood that the Church did not favour the coming of large groups together; and second, that when it was suggested to them

that group or mass movements were desirable they agreed heartily and grew enthusiastic over the possibility of bringing in large sections of the Balahis and building up the Church by inducing mass movements.

During our visit some three hundred Christians, scattered through about thirty villages of the Mandleshwar field, were organized into a new Church. Of these a small minority were communicants. In the way approved by the United Church of North India three village laymen, one of whom is employed by the Mission as a teacher-evangelist, were ordained as elders. The evangelistic missionary stationed in Mandleshwar was at the same time appointed Moderator of the new Church.

The work around Mandleshwar shares most of the characteristics of that about Khandwa. A few marriages of typical village people have, however, been performed by Christian rites and the converts examined disclosed a higher level of knowledge of facts about our Lord and the creed of the Church. A great door is open around Mandleshwar.

The Balahis are not restricted to the country adjacent to the three stations on which we have reported. Information gathered from census reports and other government papers and from conferences makes it clear that the Nimar Balahi territory is an irregular rectangle approximately thirty miles wide and two hundred miles long, extending from the Vindhyan rampart on the north to the Satpura mountains on the south and from Hoshangabad and Itarsi on the east to Barwani on the west. This territory is well provided with mission stations. Barwani Tahsil is occupied by the Canadian Presbyterians, Diwas by the United Church of Northern India affiliated with the United Church of Canada, Mandleshwar by the United Church of Canada, Khandwa and Harsud by the Methodist Episcopal Church, Harda by the Disciples, Banapura, Itarsi and Hoshangabad by the English Friends.

The Balahis are divided among themselves. The largest sub-caste is the Nimarhi. The Christian converts in the Khandwa and Mandleshwar fields are from this sub-caste, which is spread over the whole territory mentioned

above. Two other sub-castes are known as Gannora and Katia. Among them no movements toward Christ are known but a sustained effort to win them would probably bring large results.

At present the only active group movements of Balahis to Christ appear to be those around Khandwa and Mandleshwar. However in a number of other regions of the territory mentioned above Balahis are represented in the Church by larger number of converts than any other caste. We are of the opinion that a concerted movement to bring the Balahis to Christ throughout the entire territory in which they are found in force would be likely to lead large numbers of them to an early confession of Christian faith and discipleship. Whether or not that be the case we are clear in our conviction that no plan for pushing on with the work among with the Balahis will meet the full obligation of the Church if it does not present the call of Christ "Come unto me" to the whole of the Balahi population throughout the area. We recommend therefore the formation of a Balahi Evangelization Council that will be charged with responsibility for developing a united approach to the Balahis and a united policy and programme for winning them to Christ and employing them in the spread of Christian faith and purpose through the population as a whole. If this is done and a concerted effort made, we anticipate the rapid up-building of the Christian Church in this area.

The Evangelization Council would be a voluntary association of those who feel that the great door now open before them constitutes a call from God to cooperative work. Its actions would be strictly advisory. Its purpose would be to pool experience, and to help carry fire from one section of the field to other sections of the field. At the will of the missions concerned, forces might be lent from one area to another, to conserve some rapid growth, or to start the movement where it was quiescent. Tracts for the Balahis could be published which would be useful throughout the entire population of 150,000 people. Summer schools for lay leaders could most readily be planned and carried through in a united way. Common

standards of expectation would be built up. Common worship programmes and courses of instruction for new and old Balahi converts would be most economically and effectively produced by such a Council. While it requires some imagination to envisage the following development, we dare to hope that a Balahi Evangelization Council participated in voluntarily by six Missions and Churches would normally develop one great Narbadda Valley Church of Christ in this fertile territory. This would be a Church composed in the beginning of scores of thousands of Christians from the Balahi caste, and then with ever increasing power taking into itself converts from the Chamars, the Dolis, the Mahars, the Mangs, and eventually the caste Hindus.

Because the Vindhya Mountains intervene, the Balahis just described constitute a people geographically distinct from the Balahis of the Malwa plateau and adjacent territories to the north. Limitations of time did not permit a visit in person to the three areas of largest ingathering amongst the plateau Balahis. Conference with the Rev. H. H. Smith, the Rev. D. F. Smith, Miss Clarihue and others, however, indicated that at Ujjain, Kharua, and Sitamau there are village Christian communities of 400, 1000, and 150 from amongst the Balahis. At Sitamau there exists, together with the small Balahi movement, a Chamar movement of 450 persons. At present the Sitamau field seems to be the most active. These three centres are in a straight line, running in a northwesterly direction from Ujjain to Sitamau, a distance of about a hundred and fifty miles, with Kharua in the centre. It should be expected that an early development would be the fusing of these three separate areas into one by inducing growth in the intervening country. There are probably 250,000 Balahis north of the Vindhyas, 150,000 of whom live in the territory easily accessible to the United Church of Canada. Since Chamars are in two places associated with Balahis in a movement into the Christian faith, the total Chamar population should probably be added to the Balahi population, thus making an immediately approachable population of at least 300,000.

We believe that the Balahis and Chamars north of the Ghats are the great approachable castes of the level plateau land of Malwa, and that in every mission station they are a people who will not merely hear the Gospel but will accept it. The call of the present is a call to evangelize these whom God has prepared to accept the Good News. We therefore recommend that a second Balahi Evangelization Council be formed of those working in three fruitful areas described above, and that this Council too be charged with making a concerted effort toward the ingathering of these great communities. One of the first duties of the Council when organized will be a careful survey of the situation north of the ghats. A picture even more favourable than that of the Nimar Valley may be disclosed.

CHAPTER III

THE BHIL MASS MOVEMENT

From Mandleshwar we went to Ratlam to study one of several areas of the United Church of Canada Mission in which the evangelizing effort is concerned chiefly with the Bhils.

The Bhils are an aboriginal people numbering in all more than a million and a half. They live chiefly in Rajputana, Central India, Gujerat and Bombay. The Central Provinces have only 30,000 in the extreme west end of the Nimar District. The Bhils were the original inhabitants and owners of the land. With the coming of the Rajputs and later the Marathas these people were subjugated. The fertile level lands were largely taken from them. They then either retreated defiant into the hills there to maintain themselves as predatory tribes, or submitting to their conquerors became outcastes. Their custom of eating beef has always caused them to be much despised and hated by the Hindus. Major Henley writing in 1875 states, "A Thakur chief cut off the legs of two Bhils, eaters of the sacred cow, and plunged the stumps into boiling oil." When the Marathas began to occupy Central India they treated the Bhils with great cruelty. Hundreds were thrown over high cliffs and large bodies of them assembled under promise of pardon were beheaded or blown from guns. Their women were mutilated and their children were dashed against stones. Thus they became Ishmaelites with their hand against every man,—intractable, fierce, and in large parts of the country not suffering Hindus to occupy the same part of the country as themselves. In the area west of Ratlam the population is 95% Bhil. Bhil rebellions as late as this century are reported from several States. It seems inevitable that in Hinduism there is reserved for this people only one destiny,—that of low Shudras or "Untouchables." Their only escape from that fate is to live a life of constant defiance,—or to become Christians.

Though there are many outlying Bhil districts all over the level plains of Central India and Rajputana in hilly sections of the country, their main stronghold is a rough and rugged country extending from Udaipur on the north to the Satpura mountains on the south, and from Ratlam on the east to Godhra on the west. This country, 350 miles long and 200 miles wide, is Bhil-land. In many parts of it the population is 99% Bhil. In this Bhil-land the following Missions and Churches are at work: The Church Missionary Society at Kherwara, Rajputana and at Biladia and Lusadia, Bombay; The Church of Scotland Mission at Udaipur; the United Church of Northern India at Udaipur; The United Church of Canada Mission at Banswara, Ratlam, Partabgarh, Dhar; The Canadian Presbyterian Mission at Amkhut, Ali-Rajpur, Barwani, Jobat; The Irish Presbyterian Mission at Dohad, Jhalod; The Methodist Episcopal Church at Baroda and Godhra; and possibly some others whose names and stations have not come to our attention. Since the Bhils have no unified language of their own, and since Missions are divided chiefly on a language basis into Provincial Councils, it happens that these various Missions and Churches are divided between the Christian Councils of Mid-India and Bombay. Thus though they are working with the same caste, the Missions have no means of contact with each other. One of the first steps which should be taken, if this field is to be effectively worked, is a study of the entire area, so that Christian forces may approach the Bhils in a statesman-like way.

As has been said, the Bhils have no unified language. Each district uses a form of the original language which has been more or less modified by contacts with surrounding Hindus, who use one or other of the chief Indian languages,—Hindi, Gujarati, or Marathi. In the Ratlam area for example, the original Bhili has been greatly affected by the influence of Hindi to the immediate east, and of Mewari to the north. In the Dohad and Kherwara districts the influence has been almost entirely Gujarati, while in the district occupied by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission both Gujarati and Hindi have had their influence in producing the Bhili of

today. The inevitable tendency, as these various districts are Christianised, will be for the people to adopt the language which their immediate contacts indicate as natural and most helpful. Children will be taught this in their schools, its literature will be accessible to them, and in course of time the various Bhili dialects will disappear. This development will naturally take place largely along the geographical lines which now divide one language area from another. Bhil districts adjoining the Marathi area as in Western Khandesh, will probably use Marathi, those adjoining Gujerat, Gujerati, and those in Mid India, Hindi.

In the Ratlam field, the only part of the great area to be personally visited,—though we had reports from Partabgarh, Amkhut, Alirajpur, Jobat, and other stations,—there were at the time of our visit about 1800 converts all of them from the Bhils. Of these approximately 300 had been baptized within the prior 12 months, and 100 or more within two weeks. Since our visit and before May first 300 more have been baptized, bringing the total to 2100.

During four days in the district we traversed an area about 50 miles long and 30 miles wide within which there has developed a very strong Christian Movement. Wherever we went we found not only interest in Christianity but a desire for association with Christians and an apparent conviction that faith in Jesus Christ and an effort to follow Him are necessary to the highest welfare. Many village men and women told us that they expect to be Christians eventually and their hope is in Christianity. It would hardly be too much to say that within that area the Bhils we met divide into two classes: (1) those who have become Christians; and (2) those who expect to be Christians sooner or later. We have nowhere at any time seen another mass movement affecting such a large proportion of the population, for Bhils form 95 per cent of the rural population in the region to which we refer. It is our belief that this movement among the Bhils presents to the United Church of Canada Mission a challenge and an

opportunity which have rarely been given to any Church or Mission.

At the time of our visit the forces engaged in work with Bhil converts and enquirers in this rural Ratlam field were pathetically inadequate. Two Indian pastors, seminary graduates, four catechists and two evangelists of more limited training, one lady evangelist and the District Superintendent, Dr. Russell, formed the entire staff. We consider it our clear duty to urge the United Church of Canada Mission to place additional forces in the rural field itself without delay. In the selection of missionaries, Indian ministers, catechists and teachers to deal with this magnificent opportunity, consideration should be given to such personal characteristics as adaptability, sympathy, perseverance, organizing ability, hopefulness, an ability to see the viewpoint of others, and readiness to endure hardship,—especially in the matter of prolonged absence from home and deprivation of post office, telegraph and hospital services. An indiscriminate transfer of forces from other areas might arrest the entire movement. No one will help if sent to the Bhils against his will and in a mood to discredit the Christian purpose of those who need his help. Nor will much help come from the appointment to this field of men or women, who have developed a spirit of dependence upon the Mission or a disposition to despise such humble people as the Bhils. Belief in these people and in the adequacy of the Christian Gospel and the power of God to meet their needs is the prime qualification for successful work in this situation. We would point to Padre Joseph of this territory as one who manifests these desirable qualities and whose unremitting labours, together with the courageous, forward-looking policy of Dr. Russell have played a large part in the recent kindling of desire to embrace the Christian faith.

We have received definite word of another small but vigorous mass movement amongst the Bhils at Partabgarh 100 miles north-west of Ratlam. Banswara also gives indications of growth, while one or two missions of Gujerat and Bombay have noted a new spirit of inquiry and

approachability amongst the Bhils. There are one or two arrested mass movements amongst the Bhils, into which might be breathed again the breath of life. With such a situation as this in the field at large, the movement west of Ratlam possesses significance for all Missions and Mission stations that are concerned with the evangelization of the Bhils. We therefore recommend that a Bhil Evangelization Council be organized and concerted efforts be made to extend this movement to every part of the area occupied by Bhils. This should be a Council similar in nature and aim to that described in connection with the Balahi Mass Movement: a voluntary association whose actions would be of an advisory nature, concerned with pooling resources and attacking what is a common problem in a cooperative way. Its immediate task and opportunity would be to spread the fire from the Ratlam and Partabgarh areas throughout the territory.

So far as we have learned all Missions working with the Bhils are associated with the United Church of Northern India, except for three stations of the C. M. S., two of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the stations of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. We strongly advise that consideration be given to the possibility of organizing a United Church in the area in which the Bhils predominate and suggest that it may be possible to bring into one Synod of the United Church of North India the forces now associated with two or more of these separate denominational efforts.

Reverting to the Ratlam field we recommend that immediate attention be given (a) to organizing Churches, and (b) to establishing an adequate system of schools.

In preparation for the organizing of Churches, provision must be made for training pastors who will look to the Bhil converts for support, and for training honorary lay leaders. The first task is one to which the Seminary at Indore might normally have been expected to address its efforts. With the large growing Church in Bhil-land however, the radically different type of pastor required there, and the danger of turning out the wrong type of man, of

divorcing the Bhil student from his people through rearing him in the tradition of an urban situation, we are convinced that an emergency training school should be set up in Bhil-land at once, looking forward to the establishment of a seminary for the Church of Bhil-land. This seminary would be manned by men (Indian and non-Indian) who are leading the aggressive caste-wise awakening, who have definite first hand knowledge of mass movements, who teach in the Mewari Bhili of these parts, and who are dedicated to the immediate creation out of illiterate Bhils of a corps of Christian ministers. The tradition that ministers of the Church must speak good Hindi and must be trained in Christian schools from childhood upward should, for the time being at least, give way to the need for training the best of the existing leadership of the people in the knowledge of the Bible, the conduct of worship, the support and government of the Church, and the preaching of the Word. The extent to which non-Bhils, should be used is distinctly limited, for it is to be remembered that the pastors of the new Church must be those who fear neither isolation nor hardship, who believe in and love the despised Bhil, who speak and honour the Bhil dialect, and who look on sturdy independence as the normal state of the Church and of Christian people. Highly educated non-Bhils of the right type will naturally be used as supervising ministers, for the first few years, but these should be largely superceded by Bhil Christians as soon as men of personality and ability can be given adequate training.

The second task requires, we think, the holding of short term schools in selected centers in the Bhil country for men who are capable on a voluntary basis of leading their people. In the first instance chief attention should be given to teaching these leaders how to conduct simple worship services, how to prepare new enquirers for admission to the Church, how to collect offerings for the expenses of the Church, and how to establish Christian customs in regard to marriage and the disposal of the dead. The Bhils are so scattered that ordained ministers and paid helpers cannot meet these needs without the help of nu-

merous honorary lay workers. The training of these is an urgent matter.*

Schools are, in our judgment, a necessity for lifting the Christian community to a level of life that will enable them to realize God's plan for their lives and to discharge their obligation to society. We emphasize the fact that we do not recommend schools as an initial evangelizing agency, but as an agency for enriching the life of Christians by opening to them the Word of God, reinforcing Christian consciousness and providing an escape from illiteracy and its attendant evils. In a few larger villages, day schools are possible but an adequate programme will, we think, necessitate both adult education along mass literacy lines and the collecting of selected children in simple Boarding schools located in centers of the Christian population. The pastorate boarding schools of the S. P. G. among the aboriginal Mundas and Oraons of Chhota Nagpur might serve as a model. These are located at some center of population. Selected children for ten miles around walk into the boarding school on Monday morning bringing with them their food for the next four days. School starts at noon. From then to Friday noon the life of the pupils is much the same as the life in any well conducted boarding school. Friday noon the children leave, walking back to their homes and arriving sometimes before evening. The advantage of schools of this type is that they provide for intensive instruction under controlled conditions in a rural environment at a minimum cost and yet keep the children in touch with their homes. A valuable feature is that the children can spend their week-ends at home, thereby retaining their adjust-

* More recent developments make the case for these two sorts of leadership training absolutely essential, and increasingly urgent. The training of ministers of the Bhil Church cannot begin too soon. The creation of a corps of at least 500 unpaid honorary lay leaders should be pushed forward to accomplishment in the current year. Such a development will undoubtedly require the placing of additional missionaries in the area occupied by the Bhil Church, and that without undue delay. The problem is one which faces not merely the local staff at Ratlam, but the entire Mission, and indeed the Board in Canada.

ment to rural and tribal life and taking to their families each week the influences which they have absorbed in the school.

In the schools and wherever a sufficiently qualified leader, paid or honorary, is available, immense help can be given to the whole programme of reconstruction of the community on Christian lines by holding a daily service of worship. Our observations in studies of Christian work with illiterate communities in group or mass movements have taught us that the greatest force for personality reconstruction is the worship of God in terms of the teaching of Jesus Christ. To be effective the converts must themselves participate in worship. To see the preacher worship God is of little value. If the converts are to worship, the service must have meaning and appeal for them. Yet some of the forms of service common in our Churches mean little or nothing to new converts from Hinduism or animism. A liturgy seems to be necessary for illiterate people, if they are to participate freely in the services. As elements in the liturgy, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, St. Paul's Ode to Love, a General Confession of Sin and various collects have been found valuable. Orderliness and reverence are essential. These can be promoted by having a place set aside for worship, holding the service at a regular time, seating the congregation in rows, teaching each one to bow in silent private prayer immediately on arrival at the place of worship and to remain in silence until the service begins.

In closing the statement concerning the Bhils we are led to reiterate that before the Missions and Churches at work in Bhil land, especially the United Church of Canada Mission, there lies a sobering opportunity. Here is a clear case for immediate, painstaking, and effective concentration of resources. Here is a place where "mobility of Christian forces" should without delay be put into practice. It will make no great difference if many stations of Mid India live or die. But it will be a terrific loss if the Bhil opportunity slips past ungrasped. It will be a major

victory for the Christian Cause, not merely in Central India, or even in Mid India, but also in all India if a mighty Bhil Church of 500,000 comes about in the years immediately ahead. This we believe is possible. It is to the husbanding of this opportunity that God now calls us.

In revising and closing this chapter we feel burdened with responsibility for pointing out that, while the present colossal developments have come about under the wise leadership of one missionary, the Rev. F. H. Russell, D. D., their present magnitude demands the re-allocation of resources of missionaries and money on a major scale. At least two or three additional missionaries should be put into the field immediately. An increase of over 20,000 in one year with the possibility of even greater growth in the future requires major adjustments. It is scarcely necessary to say that the missionaries sent there should be such as are thoroughly acquainted with mass movement methods and believe in the growth of the Church through castewise group movements. The present policies which, under God, have aided in the unprecedented ingathering, should be continued. The only tragedy which would be greater than failing to augment the present inadequate force, would be to augment it with persons who would attempt to develop the field along the lines which have proved so barren in the central station churches of Mid India. The new Church of twenty five thousand souls needs abundant and skilful guidance. This unprecedented ingathering has created a graver crisis than before. A year ago it was a problem of persuading men to accept the Christian faith. Now it is that of caring for the twenty five thousand who have taken Christ as their Saviour; and who must be led into an adequate knowledge of their faith, and of their Master. This demands missionaries and money in terms which a few months ago might have seemed extravagant. If tragedy is to be averted in the establishment of low sub-Christian standards of life and worship, substantial new forces should be moved into the area at once—moved in with great care, but moved.

CHAPTER IV

POSSIBILITY OF GREAT INGATHERING AROUND DHAMTARI

Dhamtari—area number three on the map—is the head-quarters of a territory occupied by the American Mennonite Mission. Shortly after the establishment of this Mission the famines of 1897-1900 occurred. Hundreds of children were brought to the Mission, which cared for them in orphanages and, later, in other institutions at central stations. Converts have been won, not in groups, but as individuals, and when an individual or a family has been converted, a move to one of the institutional centers of the Mission has seemed normal and proper. Thus the resultant Christian Community is collected in Dhamtari and neighboring stations established by the Mission in surrounding territories. This Mission is one of the few which has taken a relatively small territory and manned it thoroughly. A comprehensive program of service to the Christian community, and to some extent to the non-Christian public has been carried through with devotion and thoroughness. The Christians have learned to think of themselves as a people apart from the general population and as the beneficiaries of Mission expenditures. Although the obligation to witness to Christ has been taught with admirable earnestness, the expectation that converts would not continue to live in their village homes among the non-Christians has heavily handicapped evangelistic efforts. Isolated converts have occasionally been won, but, forsaking their village homes to obtain the benefits of residence in the protected and richly served Mission centers, they have forfeited the opportunity to win their fellows to Christ.

These forces might have been overcome and a Church established in the villages had there been in the Mission and the Church a strong belief in the validity of

group conversions. However, as in most missions from the individualistic social order of Western countries, there has been in operation a fear that group movements produce an inferior, if not a purely nominal, brand of Christianity. Two strong rural Churches resulting from group movements have existed within 150 miles of Dhamtari—one at Balangir and one at Jeypore. But, because they were in other provinces and other language areas; and because the missionaries shepherding these Churches were English and German, rather than American as the Dhamtari missionaries were, therefore these two significant Christian movements remained practically unknown. Thus though the mass movement Church in Balangir and in Jeypore were both thoroughly Christian, alive, and rapidly growing, Christian leaders at Dhamtari in common with most Christian leaders in Mid-India, distrusted mass movements and preferred the kind of Church growth described above. In a similar way neither missionaries nor Indian ministers have been acquainted with the great Churches established by mass movements in more distant areas. Thus there has been an inevitable lack of recognition that a normal way for caste-ridden India to come to Christ is through caste-wise revivals.

The total lack anywhere in this Mission of groups of village converts appears to be due in part to the fact that the mission plan and organization have not been such as to encourage mass movements. Up to the present time evidence has not been available on which to base the belief, now fortunately growing increasingly common, that one type of organization, planning, expectation, thinking, theory, and work helps to produce the relatively non-reproductive central station Church of mission beneficiaries; while another type of organization, planning, expectation, thinking, theory and work helps to produce a vital, reproductive Christian Church spreading along caste lines. Of course, the establishment of any Church means the genuine conversion of men and women, and any genuine conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, whether that be the conversion of one individual or of many individuals. Thus the close thinking, careful organization, and heavy

institutionalism typical of Mid India stations and of this Mennonite Mission would appear to help the Holy Spirit to bring about isolated conversions, many of them in boarding schools; whereas another type of thinking and organization would appear to be the medium through which the Holy Spirit works to bring about conversions of groups of people in natural social units. The closest example of this second type of thinking and organization lies 100 miles to the east of Dhamtari, where four missionaries on a relatively small budget are giving guidance and direction to an active Christian mass movement among 300,000 Garas. The existing Church in 1936 numbered 15,000 and had 75 practically independent, largely self-supporting Churches. The movement is growing rapidly and in a few decades may well involve the entire caste. Thus it may be said that the Mission with comparatively limited resources, because of following this second type of organization, expectation and method, is helping the entire Gara caste to reconstruct its life around Jesus Christ. One of the most important lessons of the mass movement study is that a belief in the validity of the conversion of groups of individuals, the maintenance by those converted of continued residence amongst their fellow caste people, the proper instruction of new converts, the adequate use of leaders from amongst the caste being converted, and many other factors combine to form a pattern of action which definitely encourages the initiation and growth of group movements. While we would not wish to be dogmatic on this point, and would be the first to point out that our knowledge of how great caste-wise movements to Christ originate is as yet partial, nevertheless, what knowledge is available points definitely in the direction just indicated—namely that one way of Christianization permits and encourages groups of families from within the same caste to come to salvation without social dislocation in a constant and ever-widening stream. Whereas another way of Christianization permits and encourages individuals of many castes, having been torn from their societies, to come to salvation in an intermittent and gradually diminishing trickle. It is also worthy of note

that this coming to faith in Jesus Christ of groups of families from within one stratum of society is much more like what happened in the apostolic days of the early Church than is the central station type of Christianization.

We were pleased to discover a growing appreciation of the lessons of the mass movement study among the missionaries and Indian ministers of the Mennonite Mission. The diagnosis of the existing situation as we have presented it is not entirely our own but represents the thinking of those with whom we conferred in Dhamtari.

We believe that a new approach in evangelism has begun and that the time of ingathering is at hand. Within several castes, groups have been discovered with a very definite interest in Christianity and hunger for the things of God. Influential leaders of the Mahar caste have renounced Hinduism and are making encouraging responses to the presentation of the Gospel. There are large numbers of Satnamis in and near Dhamtari, especially to the north, though outlying settlements extend south as far as Jagdalpur. This is the one caste in Chhattisgarh from which have come both a large number of individual converts and also several small arrested mass movements. As such it would be presumed to be the most approachable. Furthermore, our actual conversations with Satnami villagers and leaders showed them to be at least as approachable, and probably as little affected by injurious marginal learnings,—the unintentional but none the less actual teachings of the Christian movement,—as are any other people. Less than one hundred miles to the east of Dhamtari lie Patna State and Khariar in which small but vigorous Gara mass movements are going on. There are Garas in the eastern edge of the Mennonite territory. These unquestionably constitute an approachable group, probably somewhat scattered. The Gonds too, while there is no evidence of their actually accepting Christ, because of their large numbers and because of their emergence from primitive religion, make one fain to believe that the grace of God will be manifested in the conversion of large groups from amongst them.

A SUGGESTED PROGRAM

1. THE EVANGELIZATION OF ACCESSIBLE PEOPLES

We recommend that all available forces be set at the task of winning groups of these Mahars, Satnamis, Garas, Gonds, and other possibly accessible castes to Christ, and training them to lead other groups to the Saviour. Schools for communities that show no interest in conversion should be closed, if need be, in order that resources may be available for a wide-spread effort on the above lines. It may be confidently expected that as the Christians seek to overcome the barriers imposed by the individualistic patterns of the past and to win groups to Christ, there will be response. Just where it will come from, no one can tell, though the chances are very great that it will come from some one or more of the castes enumerated. When it comes, when some group of families becomes Christian, the Mission should follow up this opening and work for its development. The pearl of great price is a cluster of families who confess faith in Jesus Christ and determine to live the Christian life. These should then receive the best spiritual care available (taking special precautions that financial dependence on the Mission does not develop) and men from amongst them trained for Christian leadership. At the same time the five thousand relatives and near caste-fellows of the group of families will certainly become the most approachable people in the entire area—not necessarily the most friendly, though that often is the case, but the most approachable, that is, people from whom decisions for Christ are most likely. Consequently the best men in the mission, foreign or Indian, should be delegated to preach the Word of God amongst these living organic connections of the new Christians.

2. THE PART PLAYED BY THE EXISTING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A. The Situation in Which the Church Finds Itself

The place of the existing carefully tended Christian community in the establishment of a Church which will

grow is one which deserves the most careful thought. A painstaking analysis of the existing Church membership showed that the Christians, coming out of the orphanages and leper asylums, and from the isolated converts brought into the central station from various castes, have a good many relatives throughout the tahsil. There is also a certain degree of visiting between the Christians and their relatives. However, the rich and abundant life made possible by the foreign mission has so far lifted the Christian group above its antecedents and racial connections, that no organic relationship remains. The Christians feel no inner drive to evangelize "these who are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh". The non-Christians on the other hand frankly believe that only people who are willing basely to abandon and desert their caste, chiefly for the richer life made possible through foreign funds, ever become Christians. We speak not in an effort to assess blame, but to state what exists in an attempt to solve the problem of why the existing Church does not spread more rapidly. Perhaps it is served too much.

It is interesting that the allegation so frequently made in regard to mass movements, namely that in them people become Christian from material motives, should be almost universally believed by Hindus in regard to these who have here, and elsewhere in Mid-India, become Christians in a distinctly individualistic fashion. It would seem as if the enriched life has been made possible in such a way as to separate its recipients from their people. In this connection, though it does not bear directly on the point, thinking men amongst the Christian community are beginning to realize that this "enriched life" possible in the Mission Station is an artificial thing, and that separation of the Christians from their fellows provides socially and economically only a temporary advantage. Missions cannot be presumed to remain on forever. The safety of the community requires integration with the larger group.

B. How Far Can the Mission Profitably Serve the Central Station Group ?

The problem involved is the place of the existing detached central station Christian community in the kind

of evangelism from which will eventuate living, expanding Christian movements. The existing dictum throughout Mid India is that as the Mission spends itself in an effort to lift the existing Christian community, it will render its most effective service toward the establishment of Christianity in the land. If there is any Mission or any mission station in Mid India where this theory has been given a thorough, devoted, intelligent trial, that Mission is the American Mennonite, and that station is Dhamtari. As we have carefully examined this situation in the light of the available facts, we are led to express an opinion that in the case of these artificial, loosely integrated, Christian communities which are so typical of Mid India, the above dictum must be coupled with another. This second principal may be variously stated. If economic improvement, intellectual development, social advance, and religious growth, work to separate the recipients of mission benefactions from their caste-fellows and make them a people apart, then for a Mission to spend itself in the uplift of the existing Christian community is to defeat its own end, creating instead a dependent, exclusive group of individualistic Christians, frankly not interested in the addition of others to the ranks of those for whom the Mission is caring. If genuine progress is to be made, steps must be taken to achieve the continual and substantial growth of the Church. Until such growth becomes an actuality, resources of money and personnel should be diverted from the services of the isolated Christian group to the active evangelization of these great castes which are so obviously open before us.

We are convinced of the impracticability of the expansion of Christianity through the careful tending of static Christian communities of non-typical people. We are troubled at the vast expenditure of love and sacrifice in a type of activity which has not led and probably will not lead to the establishment of vigorous growing Churches. The kind of Christianization carried on in Dhamtari has elsewhere in India been carried on for 100 years without significantly increasing either the size or the influence of the Christian community. We are appalled at the possi-

bility that such should be the outcome here. We are deeply impressed with the need here for the active evangelization of the people who have elsewhere in India come to the Christian faith in groups of families, and in numbers running up into the hundreds of thousands.

C. Helping the Church to Grow

We further recommend that every effort be made to help the Christian community to overcome its handicap of isolation and aloofness. The whole mass movement point of view needs to be passed on to the rank and file of the Churches of Christ. The conviction that growth is essential to their existence needs to be sharpened. The willingness to identify themselves with the down-trodden and the oppressed is brought about only by an act of God's sovereign grace, for which earnest prayer ought to be offered. The active participation in evangelism amongst the oppressed castes by large numbers of the rank and file of the Church will only come when large numbers of the rank and file of the missionary and ministerial corps, men and women in evangelistic, educational, medical and philanthropic work, go regularly and enthusiastically into the difficult work of bringing multitudes to Christ. A very much needed activity is the training of missionaries, laymen, co-workers, and all Christians in methods of personal work on a castewise basis amongst the oppressed and other approachable castes.

In this connection, we must call attention to the fact that paying men and women to preach often discourages honorary lay witnessing. It often leads even missionaries to assume that fervent "personal work" is the task of the professional evangelist. The poison of this heresy spreads readily throughout all ranks and the Indian colleagues of the missionaries, working in hospital or other institution, are likely to assume that theirs is not the task of bringing men and women to Jesus Christ,—that others with special training are paid to preach. Thus the universal witness of every believer is eliminated and the paid witness of a limited number of people in the evangelistic department is substituted. We venture to suggest

that an investigation as to the number of Christians of all ranks whatsoever who pray daily for the conversion of certain persons and who give at least two hours weekly to personal work with the persons prayed for, would be illuminating. The way out is not to dispense with paid evangelists and whole time evangelistic missionaries. The way out is for every earnest Christian, Indian or foreign, educated or illiterate, rich or poor, to engage in evangelistic work, preferably amongst the approachable castes as a normal and necessary part of his Christian life. Voluntary unpaid proclamation of the evangel by large numbers will aid in helping the Christian community to overcome its handicap of isolation and will mean that as groups come in, they will normally start to witness.

We were deeply impressed by the potential resources of Christian experience available within this Church and Mission for such an effort as we envisage, and by the value of such an effort for the spiritual development of the existing Church. Indeed, the bearing of the study of this mission field from the point of view of mass movements upon the wider Mid India field is great. The Dhamtari study was undertaken precisely because here was a great Mission with ample resources in men and money, carefully planning its work, and yet not sharing in the victories of the Cross in as large a measure as were the mass movement Churches. This mission station of Dhamtari is more typical of the larger mission stations of Mid India than any other station included in our study, and the lessons from this station should be applicable in all non-reproductive central stations. To put the matter in a nutshell, the Dhamtari Mission is serving the existing Christian community and the generality of the non-Christian community in the hope that somehow, some time in the future, many will come to Christ. We believe that such is not the way many come to Christ. We believe that many can now come to Christ. They are found in approachable castes, not in the generality of the non-Christian population. They can be converted in

and about Dhamtari. They have been converted there. They will be converted there. When individuals as groups are converted they ought to be so treated as to make it possible for them to win their relatives, and they in turn to spread the Gospel amongst all their relatives. This will require the careful, prayerful attention of the entire Mission. It calls for a major shift in emphasis, without which, the same results may be expected in the future as have occurred in the past. With a major shift no one can guarantee great ingathering, but at least the chances of ingathering are greatly increased. Indeed, one might be forgiven for venturing to prophesy that if this group, missionaries and Indians alike, would turn with prayer and careful planning to the winning of souls from approachable castes as their major task, group movements to Christ of great significance would result. That is the message of the mass movement survey party for a devout intelligent Christian station where there has never been anything like a mass movement.

CHAPTER V

THE GARA REVIVAL IN RAIGARH AND SARANGARH

After Dhamtari we visited Bhukta in the field of the American Evangelical Mission. Here we found an active mass movement in the Gara or Gonda caste.

The Garas are a numerous oppressed class people living in a territory extending from the Maikal Range north of Chhattisgarh in a southeasterly direction to the Bay of Bengal. The center of population lies in the neighborhood of Patna State. In Chhattisgarh the Garas are a scattered caste living in small groups of one to ten families. In Orissa they are the principal oppressed caste and live in groups of from five to seventy-five houses. There is a tradition to the effect that at one time they were the ruling race in all, or at least a central part, of this territory, but with the incoming of the upper caste Hindus have been degraded to the untouchable position they now occupy. They are addicted to drink, they eat the flesh of animals found dead, and have a reputation for being foul mouthed and filthy. One landlord said to us while he was sitting in a Church in the Christian section of the village, "Before these people became Christians we never came into this part of the village. If we wanted anyone for work, we would stand outside the group of huts and call for him." The marriage relationships of the Garas are lax and many of their songs licentious. They have been considerably Hinduized, and the worship of Ram, the ceremonial reading of the Gita, and all the common idolatry goes on on every hand. Wherever found these people are musical. Usually a part of their livelihood is earned by playing musical instruments and dancing at weddings, festivals and the like. Where they comprise a large proportion of the population, they are also weavers, cultivators and village menials.

This is the people then in the midst of which an active Christian movement is to be found. It began in the English Baptist Mission field of Sambhalpur about 1900 and spread west into Raigarh and Sarangarh states. In 1910 the Mission of the Evangelical Synod of North America took over the Raigarh territory and with it a few Gara families baptised by Mr. Hebelet. For 12 years the territory was worked from Sakti, thirty miles to the west, but the results were unsatisfactory. The increase was disappointing. In 1922 the Rev. Y. Prakash determined to live in the territory itself and established himself at Charpali, a small interior village where there were then three Gara Baptist converts and a total of 21 Christians. At first he did not learn the Ooriya language and had a number of Hindi-speaking assistants of non-Gara origin. He made small headway, even though his residence was among the people. By 1927 he had learned Ooriya, learned the ways of the people, and began using Gara convert assistants. The number of conversions rose sharply and has continued steadily. The establishment of a mission station at Chandrapur, with Mr. Albrecht in charge, has materially strengthened the work.

At the present time there are in the neighborhood of 1000 Christians. Over 100 were baptized in the week prior to our survey of the field. There are 30 paid workers and the total budget for this area worked by Mr. Albrecht and Mr. Prakash is about 500 rupees per month. There are sixty villages in which there are Christians. About 25 of these have a worker resident in them. This makes possible a strong programme of instruction and worship. The employment of such a large proportion of the new Christian population, however, while it bespeaks a most commendable interest on the part of the Mission, and does enable a high standard of instruction to be attained, is a procedure fraught with some dangers. The paid staff of 30 should be enough to care for the Church till it has grown to be one of several thousands. We recommend that this question of the proportion of paid staff to the total Christian population be made a matter of study, and that in the meantime no

further additions to the paid staff be made. The problem is partly one as how best to shift the Church on to a self-supporting basis. It would be helpful for those in charge to visit and study other mass movement areas such as the Telugu field, and the Churches established amongst the Garas by the Baptists and the Mennonites, with this matter of self-support as a main point of inquiry.

There are a number of sound features of the work which unquestionably help to spread and deepen this castewise Christian revival. Although Ooriya is not the official language of Raigarh and Sarangarh, it is used by the Christian Church and its preachers for the simple reason that it is the language of the Gara people. The Christians learn the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, their hymns, and the Ten Commandments in Ooriya. An Ooriya book, "Mukti Marg", produced by the Baptists and containing a metrical life of Christ and other useful selections, has been influential in building Christian consciousness, and forms an established part of the course of instruction. The native Ooriya dances, the Ooriya Gara drums and cymbals, and Ooriya village tunes to which are set various local compositions have been encouraged. Our visit was the occasion of two evening dances when a very skilful exhibition of drumming was given. At Bhukta a village many miles from the railway, in the heart of the Christian movement, an annual mela is held. At this the Christians for miles around assemble. Thus the Christian religion appears before the people in Indian costume. People can pay attention to its message because they are not distracted and misled by its garb.

An important phase of the Christian movement is that which centers around the boarding school at Charpali. From this school have been eliminated all those features which might alienate the pupils from their people and their village ways. The school is in a village far off the beaten track. The dwellings are simple. The teachers as far as possible are Gara Christians. The children are taught to regard the spread of the faith amongst their unconverted Gara relatives as a primary duty. Village musical instruments are kept and skill in their use is

inculcated. The school is an instrument for enlightening and aiding the Gara Revival. It is a servant of the growing Church.

The use of a simple ritual of worship and the building of chapels—cheap structures of mud and country tile or thatch—is a strong feature of the work. The values of regular daily worship, according to a simple but carefully prepared, year-round outline, yet remain to be explored. We recommend that at the first meeting of the workers careful instruction in, 'how to conduct daily worship' be given; and that through the year a definite attempt be made to set apart in each village a place for worship, and to hold a service of worship there each day.

All these features recounted in the paragraphs above, mean that Christianity is felt by the people to be their own religion and thus flourishes. We are continually impressed by the degree to which rural group-movement Churches, because of their inevitable and unavoidable integration with the life of the people, are understood by the surrounding peoples. Perhaps one element in the rapid growth of all group-movement Churches is that the essential message of the Church is better understood, or is less misunderstood, than it is in Churches which are the result of "Christianization by extraction." Furthermore the Christians themselves look on their religion not as something imposed on them from without, something whose true leaders are the affluent foreigners, not as the adoption of a foreign religion, but as the adoption of a superior Indian way to God. Most of the customs and traditions, the institutions and relationships which make up their lives are preserved and transformed by this type of Christianization. "What was ours, that, redeemed, remains ours. Though we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, still we can recognize ourselves and our neighbors as the very people who have been redeemed." The leaders of the Church—untrained though they must be at the beginning of a movement—are of one piece with the people of the Church. Christianity becomes not something which a group of people, largely foreignized and separated from their kind, is doing, but rather a way of life which

is going to redeem an entire people. And in very truth in this rural group movement, Christianity is the people's own religion. These Garas Christians have heard about the new Way from their own people in their own mother tongue. They have been instructed in the Christian faith by their own relatives and friends. Their relations are amongst the leaders of the Church and they themselves become carriers of the Word. Thus the mass movement moves, and a constantly widening stream of families pours into the Kingdom.

At Seraipali, a conversation with the landlord, a caste Hindu, indicated that the caste people here are getting the same point of view as the caste people in the Telugu country. They are now puzzled about the richness of life and the secret power which they observe in Christians and in the Christian community so recently Untouchable. The next step should normally be for one or more castes from amongst them to decide that they want that same richness and power. It may well be that, by an outreaching faith and with the living example in front of them, the process which took so many years in the Telugu country, can be induced in a shorter time in this region and that thus here, too, there will be a series of mass movements amongst many castes, some of them the higher castes.

In this region there is a caste of sweepers, known as Ghassiyas, who appear to be quite interested in Christianity. But the Gara converts have not been eager to bring them into the Church. Several of the Ghassiyas indicated to us a desire to learn of Christ and our discussions with Christians both at Seraipali and later on at Basna and Beltikri left us hopeful that an active and sustained effort by the Missions of Garaland would break down barriers and open the way for a general movement of Ghassiyas to Christ. Such a movement would save the Church from one of the gravest dangers confronting it, and would be to one of the most downtrodden people a means of escape and of entrance into the abundant life promised by our Lord.

The Ooriya Garas, as has been said, are a populous caste of over 200,000 souls, extending in a south-easterly direction from this territory of the Evangelical Mission some two hundred miles into Orissa. The English Baptist Mission has a flourishing work among them, centering at Balangir. The movement with which the Evangelical Mission is associated, as has been earlier indicated, had its genesis in the work of this Baptist Mission, as did also the work of the General Conference Mennonite Mission to which we shall presently refer. It will be possible to reinforce each of these movements by organizing a Gara Evangelization Council, pooling the resources of experience and understanding accumulated separately and planning a unified policy and programme for bringing the Garas and Ghassiyas to Christian faith and purpose.

Of particular importance to this Mission is the fact that there is a great possibility of spreading the existing revival from the Ooriya-speaking Garas to their blood-brothers and close neighbors the Lariya, or Chhattisgarhi-speaking, Garas. There are strong indications that this is going to happen in the Basna field. Carrying the Gara revival north and west will bring it into that part of Chhattisgarh which is strongly occupied by the forces of the Evangelical and other missions and may under God be the means of spreading the Faith throughout Chhattisgarh.

The value of the Gara mass movement to the Christian work in Chhattisgarh is very considerable, and we recommend that careful thought be given to letting the Satnamis, Gonds, Ghassiyas and Lariya Garas throughout Chhattisgarh know about the Gara revival. Possibly a team of Gara singers and drummers could visit the Madku Ghat Mela or make a tour of mission stations, being taken especially to those centers where people are contemplating entering the Christian life. The team should be accompanied by one who can interpret the entire Gara movement to the Chhattisgarhi audiences, tell the thrilling stories of growth through persecution, and assure his listeners that similar mass movements can and will take place amongst the Satnamis and other castes. The Evangelical Mission has an instrument here by which to

galvanize its Satnam work into renewed life—a living, present day, nearby demonstration of the fact that Jesus Christ redeems whole villages of people who commit their lives into His hand.

CHAPTER VI

THE GARA REVIVAL AT BASNA

Jagdishpur is a station of the General Conference Mennonite Mission, located near Basna in the Raipur District. Here exists a promising movement of Ooriya Garas, which is another overflow of the Baptist Gara mass movement. It started in 1916 through the efforts of one, Gopal by name, who having been baptised in Patna State migrated to a village near Basna. He was determined that his unconverted caste-fellows should hear the good news, and after unsuccessful attempts to bring help from Balangir and Raipur enlisted the aid of the Mennonites from Mohidih. He was the moving spirit for several years and led hundreds to Christ. A converted man in the midst of his own people of an approachable caste forty miles from a Mission station was again the key to revival.

Ingathering continued under Mr. Wiens till 1923. By that time about 750 people living in 42 villages in a territory ten by fifteen miles in extent had been baptized. In 1923 the mass movement was arrested. Between 1923 and 1936 while the Baptist Church was growing from 8000 to 15,000, the Basna Church of these same Gara people remained stationary at about 700. The exact figures are as follows:—

1924	..	746
1926	..	807
1928	..	850
1930	..	652
1933	..	675
1935	..	703

The causes leading to the arrest of this movement are so evident and so instructive for all Christians concerned in caste-wise revivals that we relate them, not to assess blame, but to illuminate the process by which Churches grow and decline.

At the outset, as was but natural at that time, there was an almost total lack of understanding of how the Church in India has grown, i. e. of how mass movements have been developed into vigorous Churches. In the reports of 1924-1934 there is no reference whatever to the fact that all the growth had taken place in one caste. Garas are mentioned, but not as the great open door, not as any more hopeful than the Gonds or the Hindus. No enumeration of the unconverted Garas was attempted. Indeed, because of the problems which the Gara converts brought with them into the Church, there was some tendency to regard these people as peculiarly difficult, and to question the value of more Garas in the Church. An able and vigorous evangelistic program was carried out—but on an intercaste basis. The unit to be approached was the village, not a given caste. The sociological organism of the tribe or caste was believed to be of little importance in the jungle territory around Basna—a mistake often made by missions working in remote fields. Church evangelistic campaigns sent Christians out to witness to all alike, rather than to the unconverted amongst their own relatives and former caste-fellows. To sum it up, the open door was not recognized, and the Christian forces flung themselves against the granite walls of Hinduism.

The second cause for stoppage was the sudden change of regime. In the beginning the mission policy was one of granting generous privileges to Christians, of treating the new Christians in the same way as the older central station communities. Liberal aids to the education of the children and economic assistance of various sorts seemed reasonable. At the time of baptism a new sari or dhoti or a few annas were given to the convert. This policy was definitely altered in 1924 and many privileges were cut off. A goal was striven for which made for self-confidence and initiative. No transportation to children going to boarding school at Janjgir 60 miles away and at Mohidih 32 miles away was given. The pupils walked to and fro. No Christmas gifts were given to employees. The change from the one basis to the other basis is always difficult. In Basna it helped to slow down the rate of growth.

Again, when a station was established at Jagdishpur in 1924, a large building program was necessary. Abundant work was provided for Christians. Poorer Christians moved to Jagdishpur and settled there. Although the larger number of the Christian community stayed in the villages and was not directly affected by this building program, nevertheless when, in addition to the changes indicated in the foregoing paragraph, building work also ceased, Christians living in or near Jagdishpur tended to feel themselves ill treated, and the pressure fell upon the missionaries, who despite a policy which leaned the other way, felt that they really ought to do something to lift the economic status of the Christian community. A village school and dispensary were started. A "Weavers Association" was formed (these Garas are weavers by trade) to buy yarn and sell cloth co-operatively. This took a considerable share of time and attention. Jagdishpur and the nearby villages became a typical mission station with the bulk of the effort being inevitably spent on the Christian community. This care (medical, educational, and economic) tended to transform the Christians into people who considered themselves the beneficiaries of the Mission and to transform the Mission into an organization which considered its primary function that of caring for Christians. That this transformation did not become complete was due in part to the evangelistic zeal of the missionaries, in part to a recognition of the danger and in part to the fact that the metamorphosis had not gone on for a sufficient length of time.

But while ingathering had ceased owing to the above mentioned causes, two valuable aspects of Church building were being emphasized. Of these the first was the development of a trained lay leadership. Many of the Christian villages have a Christian "mukhtiyar", who conducts worship and heads the local punchayat or council. He gives his services free. At the time of our survey, several of these lay leaders walked in some distance and gave a couple of days of time to attend our meetings and help in the work. The tradition has been established in these 25 villages that the service of God and the Church is a privi-

lege, not a source of income. This tradition should be sedulously cultivated in the years ahead. It will be invaluable as expansion takes place.

The second element of marked strength is the thorough course in the Bible. The local missionaries believe in the Bible and believe in teaching the Bible. Mr. Moyer has worked out careful courses of instruction, skilfully reinforced with abundant pictures. These courses are both for Christians, and, what is more unusual, for non-Christians hearing the Gospel for the first time. The workers and the lay leaders are "Bible Preachers" who teach the Word of God with painstaking care. As this is continued during the coming period of growth, it will do much toward building a large, vital Church firmly based on enduring Scriptural foundations.

We believe that this teaching program will gain in effectiveness as it is linked with a program of regular worship, which should be daily worship if possible. Lay leaders will need careful training to enable them to carry this on. The building, as far as possible by the villagers themselves, of simple chapels is highly desirable. Many missions undertake to supply the roof, if the people provide the land, walls, windows and doors. Where a chapel is not immediately feasible, an outdoor but fenced worship platform (chabutra) can be built. We recommend that Christian leaders in the near future make a consistent effort to turn the existing body of Christians into a Church which worships regularly and in accordance with a simple liturgy.

During the months just preceding our visit, consideration of the lessons of the mass movement study led to a concentration of evangelistic effort on groups of people in the two branches of the Gara caste, and in the Gond tribe. The response has been encouraging. New Ooriya Garas and a number of Chhattisgarhi Garas (the Hindi-speaking sub-caste not previously reached) have been baptized and others have confessed their faith and requested baptism. A view of the possibilities thus opened up is afforded by the following facts. A census of Garas carried out by the mission reveals that in the Basna station territory there are probably 12,000 unconverted Garas. To the east in Raigarh

and Sarangarh, revival is on amongst the Garas. To the south there are seventy-five Baptist Churches from amongst the Garas. In Phuljhar zamindari, the territory under consideration, there is a well established Gara Christian community of over seven hundred, amply served by able men and women. We urge that primary attention in the days ahead be given to these 12,000 unconverted Garas in Phuljhar zamindari and surrounding lands to the north. Here lies an obvious hope of ingathering. Here is the most immediately approachable group. Here are the blood relationships of the existing Christians. Here is the most widely open door before the Mennonite Mission.

The Chhattisgarhi Garas, or Bajgariyas, are a common caste all across the plains of Chhattisgarh so thoroughly occupied by Christian Missions. They are closely akin to the Pankas, another widely scattered people. Though not as numerous as some other Depressed Classes castes, these Hindi-speaking Pankas and Garas have already by ones and twos contributed largely to the membership of the Champa, Janjgir and Korba churches. Any large accession of Chhattisgarhi Garas in the Basna area may reasonably be expected to awaken Garas and Pankas, not only in Mennonite territories, but also in the districts occupied by the other missions. For this reason it is especially important that mission resources be diverted to this area as rapidly as they can profitably be used. It would seem the surest way of making the rest of the Mennonite field bear fruit. The Gara revival should be established in Phuljhar and then carried north to Beltikri, Mohidih, Champa and Janjgir.

We believe that the Gonds, too, in the Basna area should be cultivated. The Gonds are amongst the most numerous and strongest of all the aboriginal tribes in India. They number 2,260,000 in the Central Provinces. Yet they have not, except for a group of about 100 in Mandla during the 90's, become Christians in groups or mass movements, until recently when several hundreds have been converted in the northern part of Hyderabad State. The Gonds whom we met around Basna were apparently deeply moved by this news of their caste-fel-

lows in Hyderabad, and confessed a desire to be taught of Christianity. An influential Gond leader is talking of trying to bring his entire following to Christ. It has been reported to us that the night after our visit to his village, he could not sleep until in the early morning he decided to take a stand as a Christian. "Don't leave us again to our evil ways. Keep coming to us. We need your help", said the leader of the largest group we visited. A great ingathering of Garas would unquestionably operate to make the coming of the Gonds more likely, indeed, practically inevitable. From all these viewpoints the General Conference Mennonite Mission faces a great responsibility in adequately undergirding the work in this fertile territory where revival is actually underway.

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After leaving Basna we stopped at Beltikri in the Mennonite field just south of the Mahanadi river. The people studied were the Ram-namies or Ramnamiyas, as they are sometimes called. We visited several of their villages. They are a remarkable people who represent a forceful religious movement which has caught on with the Depressed Classes (chiefly the Chamars) in a territory forty miles long by ten miles wide, and is zealously served by them without any outside financial aid. The adherents of this mass movement to Hinduism believe in Ram as the incarnation of God. All tattoo the word Ram on their foreheads, some tattoo it all over their faces and hands, extremists cover every square inch of their body with the name. They write it on their clothes and houses. Their religious services consist of a stamping dance where men and women with bells on their feet and tall peacock feather "crowns" on their heads assemble to sing a single refrain for hours, with various individuals, as the spirit moves them, throwing in a variety of metrical statements in praise of Ram. Starting some forty years ago with a single man, Parsu, the mass movement now numbers about 30,000. Our general impression was that these people are not unusually approachable—at least at present. The poison of Hinduism has been drunk too deeply. The emotional satisfactions of the peacock feather camp meeting are too colourful.

Nevertheless the movement does have significance for Christians. First, should be noted the fact that here is a vigorous religious movement going on without a penny of foreign financial aid. There is abundant leadership, plenty of local support, ample dedication of life, and an enthusiasm and a zeal that is contagious. This is an accomplishment of despised Chamars working alone. That under the influence of Brahmans and the Ramayan the movement is dedicated to the establishment of caste and idol worship, and does not meet the deepest needs of its devotees, should not blind us to the fact that it demonstrates in a vivid way the natural resources at the call of any religious movement which captures the hearts of the people. Christian mass movements can and should count on great natural resources, enlarged by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Foreign funds and personnel should be used chiefly to guide and direct the awakened people.

Second, despite the apparent unapproachability of the Ramnamies in the villages visited by us, there are evidences that the movement itself, through its extravagances, its monotony, its immorality, and its inevitable bondage to Hinduism may break up at any time. Certain villages are reported to be on the verge of Christian decision. Certain leaders are said to be greatly dissatisfied with their faith. The impact of the revolt of the Adi-Hindus against Hinduism is certain to tell heavily on these people now apparently so bent on lifting themselves by rivetting on their hands and feet the chains of Hinduism. With the living example of how they have turned en masse to peacock feather crowns, it is likely that they will be particularly friendly to the idea of turning by groups to the enduring crown of righteousness, equality and spiritual power offered by Christ. We recommend therefore a continuous preaching of the Gospel along mass movement lines to these people. The spread of a vital Gara revival into the Ramnamiya field from nearby territories may be the key to the situation.

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A study was made at Janjgir of the Satnami people, an important Depressed Classes caste, amongst whom the

Mennonite Mission is working. A full statement of the Satnami situation will be found in the report on the Evangelical and Disciple fields. Here it will be sufficient to say that the Satnamis are the most numerous approachable caste in Chhattisgarh. It seems inevitable that group ingathering of major proportions will occur from this caste of Chamars. We are inclined to believe that when it begins, it will come as a flood; and that it is more likely to begin where the message comes as a new story, or where other group ingatherings have demonstrated the mass movement pattern. Consequently, while the Satnamis in the villages we visited did not seem unusually approachable, and in common with Satnamis everywhere have suffered from wrong marginal learnings, we believe that the maintenance of work amongst them, and the continued preaching of the Gospel, as a way by which groups of men, maintaining their social integration may obtain release from sin and find abundant life, is vitally important.

We would particularly recommend that groups of Satnamis living near villages where Garas have become Christians be made the object of intercession and special effort. During the last ten years there have been only two group movements amongst the Satnamis. Of these the more important is that occurring thirty miles from the Basna revival amongst the Garas and unquestionably influenced by it. Another example of the same thing occurred when a Satnami said to us, "I have an uncle living beyond Mahasamund". He writes me saying, "All the Garas here are becoming Christians, and we Satnamis also wish to become Christians". Whether through the Garas or independently, there will arise a great Church from amongst the Satnamis. To maintain work amongst them, taking full advantage of the lessons of the Mass Movement Study, is our considered recommendation.

CHAPTER VII

POSSIBLE SATNAMI MASS MOVEMENTS IN THE EVANGELICAL FIELD

In Raipur we came to the headquarters of the work of the Evangelical Synod of North America. From Raipur we went to Bishrampur, the first Evangelical Mission station in Chhattisgarh, and one which has exercised a profound influence on the Satnamis' understanding of the Christian programme. Baitalpur, another station, the centre of the chief group of village Christians from amongst the Satnamis within the sphere of this mission, was also visited. There is at present no revival amongst the Satnamis, and no group movements at all have occurred amongst them in this territory for the last twenty years. However they are the principal "untouchable" caste in Chhattisgarh. The problem here therefore is to determine why movements in these areas have been arrested and how this ripened field can be harvested.

A brief statement about the Satnamis will be necessary to understand the situation. These people number 500,000 of whom by far the larger part, probably 450,000, live in Chhattisgarh. The Satnamis were originally Rohidas Chamars. A certain Ghasi Das in 1830 started a religious movement amongst them, which soon attained mass movement proportions. Since that time there has been a constant stream of groups leaving the idolatrous Rohidas Chamar religion for the religion of Satnam, the True Name. The movement was partly a revolt against caste oppression and the domination of the Brahmans, and partly an attempt to struggle up the social ladder by giving up liquor, tobacco, meat, and idolatry. The one "True Name", "Satnam", was both the only object of worship, and the ordinary greeting. There is a tradition that Ghasi Das got his basic idea of giving up idolatry and worshipping the True Name from Christian mission-

aries in Cuttack when he was on pilgrimage to the temple of Jagganath at Puri. He foretold the coming of a white man with a large umbrella-like hat, with the Book of the True Name under his arm, and instructed his followers to believe the new teaching when it came.

The Satnamis are peasants. Quite a large number own from two to four acres of land. Probable 10% of them own 10 or more acres of land. A few are landlords, (gontias and malguzars) but the number of these is decreasing. A large per cent are landless labourers. The Satnamis are regarded as untouchables, and live in separate sections of the villages or in separate villages. Satnamism has not redeemed them from the Chamar name or from the many typical oppressed classes sins and weaknesses. They are for the most part illiterate and indifferent to learning. Ghasi Das' revolt against Hinduism did not go far enough. Idol worship has crept back in. Were not Christianity the logical outcome of the Satnami reform, the community would likely become just another "Untouchable" Hindu caste; though with the new passion of Hinduism to retain "Untouchable" votes there is a strong movement to lift the community to the level of a low Sudra caste. The leadership of the Satnamis places its hope in education and the achieving of Sudra status. Perhaps therefore the best aspect of contemporary Church history to present to the Satnami for the purpose of inclining them to Christ would be the movement among Sudras in Andhra Desh to enter the Church of Christ.

The history of the growth of the Christian movement among members of this promising and enterprising caste is replete with lessons. Work first started when the Rev. O. Lohr came to Chhattisgarh, bought 1600 acres of land at Bishrampur in 1868 and began to tour and preach. He received an enthusiastic welcome from the leaders of the Satnamis, and it looked at first as if the whole caste would become Christian. When, however, they discovered that a change of life was expected, and that polygamy and lustful practices were forbidden, the Satnami leaders became definitely indifferent, if not hostile. From then on individual converts were won with a fair degree of regularity over a

very wide territory—Mr. Lohr and his associates toured extensively. These came almost always from amongst the Satnamis. We closely questioned 16 of the oldest residents of Bishrampur and Baitalpur. The conversion pattern in each case was the same. The story of Timothy Loknath as translated by the Rev. M. P. Davis is typical. “My uncle Phirto *went to Bishrampur* to visit his brother Paulus Munshi, [who *had gone there* previously] saw how the Christians lived there, came back, turned over his land to my father and *went to Bishrampur* with his family. Not long after my brother Lute came to get us also. We desired to sell our land to the landlord, who said, “Don’t go. Remain here”. But at last we sold to him. There were nine of us, four brothers, three sisters, and parents. Taking two small children on his shoulders father *went* with us and our things *to Bishrampur* May 5, 1880”. The italics are ours.

This deliberate policy was dictated by a belief that it was impossible for the Satnami to remain in his village and lead the Christian life. Isolated Christians remained ignorant of Christian truth, were practically never able to participate in Christian worship, and under the pressure of caste and heathendom either lapsed morally or apostacized. Therefore converts were encouraged to come in, were given land and work, so that while earning their own living, they could be instructed in the faith, educated, disciplined, and made into good Christians. While it is true that this policy built up a devout, church-going and intelligent Christian community of hundreds at Bishrampur, it also established clearly in the minds of lay-Christians and non-Christians, that becoming a Christian meant—(a) leaving one’s people and going to live at the mission settlement; (b) leaving one’s old landlord (feudal lord) and becoming the follower of the benevolent Padre Sahib, who thereupon became at least partly responsible to see that his followers had work and enough to eat; (c) living a life free from persecution in a community richly served by foreign funds (schools, dispensary, famine relief, etc.); (d) accepting the Christian religion in place of the Satnami faith.

On top of this fatal land colony experience came the famine in 1897—1900. The conviction that Christianity,

as seen at Bishrampur, was a good thing had been growing steadily, especially in villages near Bishrampur and Baitalpur; and when the special stimulus of hard times came, large numbers were baptised. Dr. J. Gass said to us of this famine period, "Many, possibly as many as 2000, were baptised. Practically all were Satnamis. Probably 600 went back, and 1000 moved to Baitalpur and Bishrampur. Many went to Calcutta and elsewhere."

Sixty-three families from eight villages from within 5 miles of Bishrampur were baptised and remained Christians for several years. These expected no doubt the same benefits which the Bishrampur community received. They did receive work and help during the famine. When, after the famine, relief work ceased, when the movement grew so big that all could not receive the personal paternal care of the missionary, when Lohr Sahib, whose benevolent rule through famine times had endeared him to many, suddenly died, and when the Hindu landlords seeing that Lohr Sahib was dead began again to threaten, oppress and persecute the village Christians, then the village Christians living outside of Bishrampur apostacized. Today Bishrampur stands alone with no group of Christians living in the villages in which they were converted.

The villages around Baitalpur fared better, possibly because there was less land to give out, and possibly because there was no abrupt change of regime at a critical time. There remain today four villages with two to eight Christian peasant families in each. But none of these groups grew after 1904. Near Raipur was a small movement at Jora, which persists to this day, but which, in the 38 years without accessions from the outside, has become "a group apart" with little vital connection with the Satnami community.

A third factor in determining the mind-set of the present-day Satnami was the orphanage-reared Christian boy and girl. Together with the famine, there came into the mission a large number of famine orphans. These and the children of the Christians were served with utmost love and devotion. This mission has always stressed education. The best training available, at that time up to the 7th

Hindi, was provided for the orphans. Funds, personnel and other resources of the mission were absorbed by the orphanages. Many children were cared for by the mission for eight, some for twelve and some for even eighteen and twenty years. The resulting Christians were completely divorced from their own people, their villages, their customs. They were peculiarly dependent on the mission. The result was a loosely integrated community bound together chiefly by their common relation as beneficiaries of the mission. Those not in mission service frequently felt aggrieved, and were called "outsiders" by those in mission service. There was a good deal of friction in Bishrampur and Baitalpur, especially when paternalism came to be recognized as an evil and people were encouraged to stand on their own feet. As for the Hindus and Satnamis on the outside, these orphanage and boarding school products failed to impress them, except as a people consenting to profess the Christian religion in return for rich services received.

In their turn it was difficult for the Christians to imagine any one becoming a full-fledged Christian unless he, too, came to live in the artificially enriched soil of the Christian settlement. Spontaneous evangelism of Satnamis by their Christian relatives grew less and less. The Christian community, predominantly of the Chamars, set its face in a determined fashion to raise its social status. A sad blunder was committed when to achieve this end several of the Christian community living in Bishrampur, were excommunicated for dealing in hides and bones. "What will the Hindus think of Christians if we permit this hide-and-bone business", said Christian leaders. "How can we commend our religion to Hindus", they went on, "when it permits its followers to gather hides and bones"? This adoption of Hindu standards to raise the status of the Christian community, rationalized into an attempt to commend Christianity to Hindus, has failed utterly to win the Hindus. It has reacted disastrously upon the Christian community in fostering the idea that a group rises through excluding from its fellowship occupational descendants of Simon the Tanner. The acceptance of an occupational test of fellowship and a rewriting of

the faith so that it reads, "No one dealing in hides or bones or in the removal of filth can become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ or be cleansed of sin by His blood", has had a damaging effect on Christian moral standards and the Christian sense of brotherhood. External matters which have nothing to do with morals or religion have been mistaken for the essentials. Outwardness has replaced inwardness. The damning heresy that certain occupations are in themselves impure or detrimental to the soul has become an article of the Creed. Men and women failing to give to the Church, or to worship God, or to live pure and holy lives were tolerated, but anyone dealing in leather was excommunicated. It is thus in Hinduism. Naturally the acceptance of Hindu standards has dimmed the desire to evangelize the unconverted untouchable relatives of the Christians themselves. Many Christians are engaged in severing the ties which connect them with their Satnami relatives, thus damning the channel along which the blessing of God might flow. The boarding-reared children have, alas, not been religiously reproductive.

An element in the situation, of which account must be taken, is the system of village primary schools which has been established. There are 45 schools with a total enrollment of about 4400. Of these about 800 are Depressed Classes children and 3600 are the children of Caste Hindus. Some missionaries think of this effort as purely social service, disinterestedly helping forward the cause of education in this backward section. "Illiteracy is a greater evil than leprosy. From the evangelistic standpoint, fighting these evils may not seem important, but from the Christian standpoint, in the service of the people, we must address ourselves to this problem, if no one else is doing it", wrote one. The majority of the missionaries to whom we talked, however regarded schools as a form of evangelistic effort. Bible is regularly taught and one missionary expressed the opinion that, though neither had won many converts, the schools were a better evangelizing agency than the evangelists, in that the work was more regular, was better supervised, was carried on by better-trained

men and with more impressionable material. Assuming that the ultimate justification of these schools depends upon whether they help to build a great vital Church, we are compelled to call attention to the fact that primary schools for non-Christians have not won large groups of men to Christ. Rather the evidence is that, in circumstances such as these, mission village schools for non-Christians have actually hardened their pupils, so that when revival has spread through the territory, it has left Christians everywhere except in those villages occupied by a mission school. In these days when ingathering of adults by the hundreds is taking place all over India and in particular in four stations within 70 to 200 miles of Raipur, the school process, which requires that those influenced grow to manhood before they decide for Christ, is far too gradual. To conclude: if the schools are to be justified as social service projects, that is one thing; but we are convinced that they have not and will not initiate great ingathering of the approachable castes. Pinning hope for the growth of the Church in the villages to numerous government grant-in-aid schools is we consider to a considerable extent responsible for the present static situation. The enrollment in these schools is 82 per cent Hindu and where Hindus predominate in the classes the atmosphere is rarely favourable to Christian evangelism.

The experiences recounted in the previous paragraphs have been most discouraging to the Christian staff at work in these stations. Long, devoted and intelligent labours have been rewarded by considerable reversions. The Christian community which does remain is aggrieved at a mission which no longer considers its primary duty the material support of the Christian community. Educational and evangelistic efforts have been less fruitful than was expected. Thus, there is a tendency to produce in some of the Christian leaders a belief that the Satnami Chamar is of too poor stuff to make a vital Christian Church. To the extent that such a belief is seriously entertained, it very greatly prejudices the chance for a revivifying Christian movement among the Satnamis. Consequently we desire to point out that many castes

more ignorant and uncivilized, more sinful and degraded, more stunted by oppression and untouchability have in mass movements been redeemed by the grace of God, and have developed into strong indigenous Christian Churches. It is also true that the history of the self improvement of these people who completely gave up idols, tobacco, the keeping of pigs, chickens and goats, the eating of certain vegetables, and to a large extent the eating of meat of any sort, who achieved a considerable degree of organization, and have maintained it in the face of foes without and within, is indicative of great potential ability. While, therefore, we can readily understand how a belief in the utter inferiority of the Satnamis should have arisen, we are convinced that serious thought will, on the contrary, convince most people that the Satnamis Chamar is well above the average amongst the oppressed class people of India today.

This analysis of the situation as seen from the point of view of possible castewise ingathering has been stated at some length because the situation is one more or less common to all Mission stations in Chhattisgarh, but chiefly because the possibilities for castewise revival amongst the Satnamis must be viewed against the background of the existing situation. With that as analysed, what should be done to cooperate with the Spirit of God, who elsewhere in India is bringing 125,000 to 200,000 of the oppressed classes a year into the abundant life in Christ Jesus? What should be done to help make abundant life through the Church the possession of these oppressed shepherdless "True Name" Chamars? At the outset we would state that since mass movements are brought about by the Holy Spirit, it must not be imagined that they can be induced by close thinking, good organization and hard work alone. Nevertheless the Mass Movement Study has revealed certain facts concerning the way in which God has redeemed numerous peoples and has built great Churches. From amongst these facts, those which seem especially important in relation to this situation are herewith presented in the belief that following them consistently for a period of years will greatly increase the chances of vigorous Church growth.

First comes that unquestioned fact, that certain peoples are prepared by God for a widespread response at a given time to His Word. The "Untouchables" and Aborigines of India give every indication of being such peoples and this is the time for their response. The Satnamis are the most numerous of the "Untouchables" of Chhattisgarh and, to date, the caste from which there has been the greatest number of converts. We believe that they are a people prepared by God to accept His Son in this generation.

Another most important fact in the growth of the Church has been an indomitable faith that God wills the salvation of those who are responding to His Call. We believe that an essential factor in renewed ingathering from amongst the Satnamis is a heightened faith that God's grace can and will operate amongst this approachable people, so uniquely prepared for the Gospel, who are so nearly ready to accept Him, and from whom have already come 5000 or more Christian men and women. God's arm is not shortened. These Satnamis are part and parcel of the oppressed hosts who throughout India are restlessly pondering the proposal of leaving bondage and starting the march to Canaan. It is true that the control of the caste through bhandaris and mahants, a control centralized in the gurus at Bhandar, is an obstacle. But the obstacles on the road out of Egypt have again and again been overcome by the power of God, and can be so overcome here too. God is greater than Pharaoh.

Of particular importance is what the Satnami or other approachable person unconsciously believes "becoming a Christian" to mean. It goes without saying that the central Christian message is Jesus Christ crucified for sinful men. That is the message preached by this Mission all through the years. That is the only message which will win men to the changed life. But under the existing circumstances, extreme care must be taken to see that this glorious message does not mean to the listener that "the individual for benefits received goes to the mission settlement to get saved and leaves his relatives and former comrades to get along as best they can unsaved". Our conversations with Satnamis in the vicinity of Raipur,

Bishrampur, Janjgir, Dhamtari and Mungeli convince us that this individualistic pattern dominates their thinking. It dominates it even in remote sections of the plain, but is especially true within twenty miles of any mission station. So while the center of the Christian message must and will remain the cross, the periphery must be such that the fatal individualistic pattern is superceded by the group pattern. To erase the harmful marginal learnings, acquired incidentally from the conduct of the Christian enterprise, and not from any plan of the Christian leaders, will require careful re-education of workers, Indian and non-Indian, and of lay Christians to the mass movement point of view. This means not merely reviewing the lessons of the Mass Movement Study, but also consciously eliminating from the preaching and teaching illustrations of people who were converted, left their villages and were educated in central station schools. All materials which even inadvertently assume or imply that people will probably not become Christians, that if they do they will leave their villages, that they will find themselves out of the old social group, that they will have to marry into the central station Christian group, or that their children will go away to school, lead as a rule in the wrong direction. Conversely, the Christian message should be presented to the accompaniment of a series of vivid pictures of great caste movements to Christ, of individuals staying in their own homes amidst much persecution and by the witness of their victorious lives leading their families and caste fellows to Christ, of Christians forming little Churches in remote villages far from any mission aid, of people who became followers not for education or uplift but for salvation, of village chapels built by the people themselves, and of ordinary villagers transformed by God's grace and made great leaders in growing and victorious village Churches. The teaching of abundant current material of this sort to his workers is the duty of every superintending minister. The continual use of such victorious illustrations by the preachers and the missionaries amongst the people of approachable castes will do much to encourage contagious reproductive Christian decisions.

A most important task will be that of helping the Hindi-speaking Christian community see and adopt the revival and ingathering point of view, and another that of firing them with the belief that in these days they can expect God to bring in their relatives and friends.

The Evangelical Mission is fortunate in having a strong revival in progress amongst the Garas to the south and east of the Satnami field. This should be of much value in demonstrating to the Satnamis the group pattern of accepting Christ, as opposed to the non-reproductive individual pattern. Strategy lies in using the Gara revival in and around Basna to light fires in the Satnami settlements lying adjacent to the region of the Gara awakening. From this point of view we feel that the Pithora field is of great importance. While we were unable to visit this, we talked to the Rev. M. M. Paul, the person in charge, and the account he brings of the group movement of Satnamis under Prem Das, a former mahant, is encouraging. In April 1934, Prem Das, his uncle and his brother-in-law, twelve people in all, professed the Christian faith. Three months later Prem Das won five of his cousins. In March 1935 nine other relatives joined this small Christian group. Other accessions have since taken place and interest is running high amongst the Satnamis for miles around. We believe that the Pithora field will repay additional support and a close application of mass movement methods. For the person in charge to visit the Baptist and Mennonite Gara Churches frequently and to study the growth of the Church there would be distinctly helpful.

In close connection with this is the desirability of carrying the Gara revival north and east from Basna. There are considerable numbers of Garas living scattered through this territory and nothing will hasten a revival amongst the Satnamis more than the example of their Gara neighbors becoming Christians on group lines.

In view of the fact that the general situation in the Disciples' territory to the north is more hopeful, intensive cooperative work along mass movement lines to the south of the Disciples' territory would be advantageous to both.

One of the most hopeful signs concerning the Satnami community is that the awakened Mahars are trying to effect an alliance with the Satnamis. While we were in Raipur on two successive nights we were visited at Dr. Gass's bungalow by a deputation of representative Mahars. They expressed themselves as determined to follow Dr. Ambedkar wherever he might lead them. They were determined to break with Hinduism as the instrument of their sufferings. They told us of their struggle for the Satnamis, and of the latter's disposition to bargain with the Hindus. They described various efforts to draw the Satnamis into an alliance with the Mahars to leave Hinduism. These statements have later been verified by interviews with the leading Mahars of Chhattisgarh. The Mahar revolt will make every effort to enroll the Satnamis also. The impact of the fierce denunciations of Hinduism, now the stock in trade of every Mahar youth, will be brought to bear with great force on the Satnamis. Tremendous upheavals may confidently be anticipated. The Satnamis will inevitably be drawn into the revolt of the "Untouchables," or the Adi-Hindus, as they prefer to be called. This makes it all the more important that the Christian forces be aware of how large populations have been Christianized, and that Christians preach and teach the ingathering of multitudes, as related in the Scriptures. Days of unimagined opportunity lie ahead. We are not describing an open door, but rather the downfall of the walls of Jericho, leaving the city open at a thousand points to the entry of the healing forces of the Gospel.

Finally we recommend that there be widespread and continued prayer for ingathering; that amongst all, Indian and non-Indian, prayer bands be formed of those who will covenant to pray for revival amongst the Satnamis and other approachable castes such as the Garas and Mahars, that supporters in other lands be asked for prayer; that individuals and villages and beginning mass movement be made the object of widespread prayer. In a day of great opportunity amongst one of the most accessible people in India we believe that the group approach will encourage decisions for Christ which will multiply

and reproduce themselves; but we are convinced that the spiritual power needed to initiate any such vast movement will be supplied only as people pour themselves out in directed prayer for the salvation of these five hundred thousand Satnamis who are so near to the Kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII

POSSIBLE MASS MOVEMENT IN THE MUNGELI-BILASPUR DISTRICTS

The last area surveyed by the three of us comprised Mungeli, Fosterpur, and Takhatpur, three stations of the India Mission of the Disciples of Christ where we spent two days. We had conferences with people from Bilaspur also, and believe that the conditions reported from the Mungeli Tahsil would hold in general for the Bilaspur area. An extensive enumeration of Satnami houses within about ten miles of mission stations indicated that there are about 54,000 easily reached Satnamis in this region. The total number of Satnamis in the two tahsils is given in the 1900 Gazetteer as 100,000. The general description of the Satnamis as given in the previous chapter is applicable here.

An outstanding factor in the Mungeli work was the conversion in 1890 of Hiralal, a Satnami boy of good family. He was quick to learn and while he joined the mission staff resident at Mungeli at first in menial capacities and later as a co-worker, he never forgot his people nor was ashamed of his origin. He won all the members of his immediate family to Christ. He has laboured incessantly for the conversion of his caste fellows. He has a flair for medical work and is a skilful, though a self-made, physician. His faithfulness, integrity and earnest Christian character have won for him added responsibilities in the Mission, and in 1925 in view of his leadership in the Christian enterprise he was ordained. His skill and loving patience gained him universal respect in the Mungeli Tahsil where his name has become a household word amongst all classes. With all this he proclaims himself a Satnami convert and yearns and labours for the redemption of the Satnamis. He knows who are the landlords of most of the villages for miles around Mungeli and has the names and life histories of hundred of prominent Satnami

families in mind. It is largely owing to him that the Sat-nami situation in this area is as hopeful as it is.

Paternalism has, however, here, too, hindered the work. Converts were given a new sari and blanket upon baptism, loans on security of land were made to needy village Christians, work was frequently provided, famine relief funds were distributed in times of scarcity. All this helped to build up a feeling that those only become Christians who are in dire need of material help, or who in desperation know not where to turn for aid except to the Christians. It should be remembered that this belief grew up in spite of definite teaching to the contrary. One ventures to predict that as long as people become Christians by ones and twos and in general from the poorer members of the caste, it will be impossible to avoid making the converts the favoured beneficiaries of Mission expenditures and thus establishing in their minds a sense of vested interest in the income of the Mission. The convert comes into a mission with rich resources, a mission dedicated to rebuilding life. The mission has comparatively few converts and would not be true to its light if it did not do all it could to reconstruct the life of each Christian. Here comes a man who with a loan of ten rupees can set up as a tin smith, a peasant who with 20 rupees would be able to buy an ox and thus get his work done, a couple of bright girls and the father has not a rupee to spend for their education, a syphilitic who needs only eighteen rupees worth of injections to make him whole, a family starving and willing to work hard as long as the Mission supplies work, and so on ad infinitum. What can be done but to meet these needs! No wonder that "becoming a Christian" means "getting help." The only way out, we believe, is group gatherings of sufficient size and strength so that the economic life of the people remains substantially what it was before, and improves, not as a result of Mission aid, but as a natural outcome of a changed nature, a cooperative outlook, a release from the shackles of inferiority complexes and from oppressed mentality. Only under such circumstances, is the Great Gift seen to be the Church, the Book, the Redeemer and

His Liberating Religion. Only so will the auxiliary services of the Christian movement, education, medicine, rural uplift and the like, find their proper place and be seen by all to be essentially secondary. They are not Christianity. They are what Christianity makes possible.

Despite the handicap of paternalism, however, and the tendency of converts to come in to central stations, the Satnamis were so responsive, so prepared by God for this step that a large number of people were baptised and remained in the villages. By 1916 there were 52 villages in which there lived Christians. In several places large groups had professed the Christian faith. Between 1914 and 1924 there were 890 baptisms. Of these the majority came before 1918 when the movement reached a peak. In 1912 plans were laid to work with a group of 50,000 Chungia Sita Ramia Chamars. This work was skilfully conducted by Dr. Hiralal and the missionaries, on carefully worked out mass movement lines. The people responded very favorably. The fever of interest kept mounting higher and higher. In 1917 the leaders of these 50,000 people assembled to decide to become Christians. Under the threats of Hindu landlords, aided by minor police officials, the decision was swung from a distinct affirmative to a statement that "We will decide this matter in four years after we have thought about it some more". Interest naturally collapsed and the movement went into a decline. But the great decision was missed by inches only.

When the movement upward was stopped, the movement downward began. By 1925 there were only 23 villages left in which there were Christians, and the Church membership was only 240 greater than in 1914. This was partly due to reversions, partly to the influenza epidemic, and partly to the moving of isolated families to the land colonies established at Pendridih and Fosterpur and to central stations. As a result of this experience of an arrested mass movement, the idea gained ground amongst the missionaries that real ingathering was a long way off, that the Satnami was too weak to stand alone and that these islands of refuge (land colonies) were essential

to the progress of the Christian cause. A third such was almost purchased in 1934. Fortunately other counsels prevailed.

With the publication of "Christian Mass Movements in India" a new point of view swept over this Mission, and on September 10th, 1934 a meeting of all the evangelistic forces was held in Mungeli. At this meeting the fundamentally approachable character of the Satnamis was recognized anew. The continual ingathering from this one people was correctly judged to be evidence of their responsiveness. Hopes long deadened were revived. The fact that most of the Christians have unconverted Satnami relatives was seen to be a tremendous advantage. The forty years of the conversion of individuals and small groups of families, and the arrested movement of 1917-18, were recognized as preparation of the field. It was resolved to work for the salvation of the Satnami people. Prayer was mobilized to this end. Three tracts, embodying the mass movement point of view, were prepared for the Satnamis. Dr. Hiralal was released from his hospital work to give a major part of his time to evangelism.

The results of this thorough going adoption of the lessons of the Mass Movement Study have been gratifying. In the year following about one hundred adult baptisms took place, largely amongst the Satnamis. This was a larger number than had been baptized since 1920. Interest has been stimulated throughout the district. The reborn faith of the Christian workers is contagious. It is the belief of the Christian workers, which our conversations with local Satnamis confirm, that there are thousands of Satnamis who in their hearts believe that Christianity is for them the only way out and up, but who are held back by fear that if they profess this Christian faith they will be left isolated forever from their fellows, as the present Christians appear now to be. In view of this it seems probable that when the first 500 are won in a typical group movement other thousands will hasten to declare their faith too.

We believe that great possibilities are now open before this Mission. The mistakes of the past are seen and are being avoided. We know of no mission which is

making greater use of the lessons of the Mass Movement Study.

We would recommend that every effort be made to make all workers thoroughly acquainted with the group movement pattern. If possible, visits to the great mass movement areas should be arranged for selected evangelists. Numerous stories of the conversion of people should be made available to each preacher and he should use them continually so that the Satnamis come to know that mass movements are occurring and that in these mass movements the Church makes certain requirements of its followers in the way of memorizing of the Scripture, regular worship by the village group, self-support, the propagation of the faith amongst the entire caste, the enduring of persecution not only for the sake of Christ but also for the sake of the redemption of one's people, and the like. Even yet, after 18 months of the new emphasis, the old individualistic pattern is dominant in most Satnami minds. They get glimpses of the new but the old comes back to blot it out. Many workers, too, do not yet see just how groups will come and are still talking in terms of individual separate decisions. More light in the vernacular is absolutely essential, if the mass movement point of view is to carry over to the workers on whom the nature of the movement largely depends.

We also recommend that congregational worship, where every member knows and uses several of the great formulations of the Faith, be established. The wide use of a simple liturgy containing the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and a Statement of Faith is highly desirable if the worship needs of the illiterate are to be met. In common with all missions of a boarding school area such as Mid-India, the services of worship in Mungeli are intended largely for the literates. Illiterates attending receive but scanty spiritual food. Since the illiterates are the ones who have the greatest contact with the Satnamis the ill effects of the policy are manifest. It is particularly important that liturgical congregational worship be made a part of the life of the village Christian group as soon as the latter is formed. The building of

village chapels, by the people themselves as far as possible, or the establishment of worship platforms fenced in to keep out the cattle, is a great aid to vital group worship.

In view of the great likelihood of major ingathering here in the near future and the subsequent need for village schools—of the one-teacher type, chiefly if not exclusively for Christians, whose teachers will also be pastors of the local groups and preachers in surrounding villages,—we recommend that the Disciples Mission risk the preparation of a number of their village boys of Satnami origin for such work, employing them as evangelists pending the beginning of the movements. Until the government policy toward the education of the Depressed Classes becomes more generous and more just, it will be impossible to obtain grants-in-aid for such schools, but they should nevertheless be carried on as fast as groups are converted. The Christian educationalists of the Central Provinces might well constantly urge government to adopt a more realistic attitude toward the education of village children. Instead of restricting grants to the relatively few institutions which can attain proper buildings and a suitable number of trained teachers (which policy will never meet the needs of the Depressed Classes) grants should be made available to any trained teacher who maintains under suitable supervision a school of twenty five children and passes a creditable number of them. Then schools amongst the underprivileged would become a possibility.

Two factors, distinctly new, which would probably have decided the issue in favour of the Christian faith in 1917, are the Gara revival whose nearest manifestation is only 70 miles to the south east of Bilaspur, and the Untouchable uprising under Dr. Ambedker. The former is of great importance both because of the fact that it is a nearby demonstration of a group movement, and because the Garas in the Bilaspur District may very well be reached as a group. The latter is certain to challenge the present drift of the Satnami leaders toward Hinduism, and to shake the very foundation of existing Satnami thought. That an incalculable host, totalling possibly 1,000,000, in the Andhra country is definitely contemplating professing the

Christian faith, that there is a wide-spread Chamar revival in the United Provinces, that may affect hundreds of thousands; that a Christian movement numbering 500,000 is spreading rapidly 200 miles east of this province, and that 25,000 Bhils west of Ratlam have been Christianized in the past year; all these are hammers of God which will strike mighty blows at the obstacles which block the path to salvation for these multitudes. The proportion of Depressed Classes in Chhattisgarh is very high—32 to 34 per cent of the total population. The Garas and their close relations, the Pankas, are common all across the Mungeli-Bilaspur area, and amongst the Garas in the south eastern part of Chhattisgarh and beyond, 17,000 to 18,000 have become Christians. The Ghasiyas are a most approachable Untouchable group, though not a large one. The various castes of weavers are found in large numbers everywhere, and in the west of the area are the Mahar weavers who are going to leave Hinduism definitely and in the immediate future. The largest of the "Untouchable" castes is the Satnamis. It is also the one from which thousands have already become Christian. Add to it related groups of Chamars and it becomes all the more significant. We consider that revival may break out any where, but as far as can be judged by careful investigation the most approachable group, outside the Garas in the Raigarh-Basna area, is the Satnami caste in and about Mungeli. We received reactions from them quite similar to those that non-Christians give in areas where their own people are actually becoming Christians. We believe that a great door, which should receive the greatest care and attention, is open here to the Disciples Mission. The concentration of sacred resources of men and money as fast as they can successfully be used is evidently desirable. The present times constitute a call "to launch out into the deep" and "to let down the nets". They demand an enlarged faith, heightened expectations and renewed dependence upon God.

CHAPTER IX

THE MANDALA MISSION FIELD

It will be recalled that the purpose of the Mid-India Survey was not to appraise the general work of any Mission, but to discover what growth had taken place along group lines and what possibilities existed of further growth along group lines. The questions asked were: In the midst of awakening castes on every hand what hope has a given mission of leading one or more of these castes to Christ? As Untouchables and Aborigines grope for light, what can the mission concerned do to bring them into the Church?

Three mission fields, mentioned in previous chapters, have been surveyed where no mass movement is now or ever has been in progress. The work of the Mass Movement Survey Committee there has been to calculate those factors which have militated against the normal development of the Church (i. e. against caste-wise ingathering, or a large or small mass movement); and to attempt to judge partly from past conversions, and partly from present tendencies, which are now the approachable castes from amongst which growth may be expected if vigorous aggressive caste-wise evangelism is employed. Two of the most important tasks of the surveyers have been to heighten hope and expectation amongst the members of the Churches visited, and amongst the members of the Mission staff; and to share with these members the knowledge of how large groups of people have been and are being Christianized i. e. how mass movements have come about and are being formed into Christian Churches.

Mandala was approached with the expectation that here would be found one of the most important cases of arrested mass movements. The question was: what should be done in Mandala to reinduce ingathering from amongst the approachable people of that great forest district.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN MANDALA

In 1841 six German missionaries were sent out by Pastor Gossner of Berlin in response to an appeal by Sir Donald MacLeod of Jubbulpore. They arrived in Karanjia in February of 1842 and, of the six, four died there in the rains of 1842 probably of cholera, though possibly of malignant malaria.

In 1885 the field was again occupied. By 1890 there were in Mandla District six missionaries, four Indian evangelists, and four Indian teachers. The Mission was named "The C. M. S. Mission to the Gonds," which later became known as the "C. M. S. Gond Mission." In 1890 there were in the Indian Christian community 48 men, 22 women, 39 children, a total of 104. Of these 104, one may assume that about 75 were local converts and about 30 were Christian workers and their families, i. e. people from outside the area. Throughout these early years, the similarity of the Mandala Highlands to the Chhota Nagpur Highlands, of the Gonds to the Uraons and Mundas, and of the Mission started by Gossner's missionaries in Chhota Nagpur in or about 1842 to the Mission started by Gossner's missionaries in Mandala in 1842, impressed itself on the C. M. S. authorities and many of the early workers were Chhota Nagpur Christians of the S. P. G. Mission. One may say that it was the expectation that the great ingatherings in Chhota Nagpur could be reproduced in Mandala. It was a wise thought and probably came very close to achievement.

From 1890 to 1897 the numbers of converts, adult baptisms, rose steadily, especially around Marpha and Sukulpura. The number of villages in which there were converts increased year by year. There were small group movements amongst at least four castes. A number of families came into the Church from each of these castes, and tribes, Baiga, Dhulia, Panka and Gond. Of these, probably the Panka converts were the most numerous. The Christian religion was spreading, as it usually does in its vital periods, along caste lines from family to family. The Christian forces do not seem to have been keenly

aware of the importance of this caste-wise growth, and one sees very few, if any references, to the caste of the converts. One of the older workers, a man from Chhota Nagpur said to me, "If in those early days we had recognized the importance of the spread along caste lines, and had worked for the salvation of one caste first, expecting the others to come, after the Church had grown strong in one caste, we would have done better." Whether it would have been wise to center on one caste or not, or whether what was needed was a keen recognition of the fact that in India Christianity does spread chiefly, if not solely, along the highways of a given caste, it is now impossible to say. At any rate four small and not clearly defined caste movements to Christ were occurring in those early years.

From 1898 to 1902 the total number also increased rapidly, but the increase was largely that achieved through the baptism of famine orphans in the orphanage at Patpara. During these terrible years the mission turned to relief work, and large sums of money were given to keep people from starving. At this distance it is impossible to make a categorical statement, but from conversations with workers of that period, Rev. Khalko and others, and from the statements in the Annual Reports, it appears likely that the famine stopped whatever natural group movements were going on.

The stoppage seems to have had several causes. In the first place, Christians were helped financially in the famine years. They were helped liberally. Others doubtless were also helped; but the impression got abroad both among the Christians and among the non-Christians that the Mission was the "ma-bap", the great provider, that only those in dire need of help became Christians, and that it was the first duty of the Mission to look after the physical welfare of its converts. With the building of mission stations a great deal of work was provided, cutting and hauling timber, making bricks, building walls, cutting grass for the thatch and so forth. Hard times come frequently in Mandala, and it seemed necessary to make work for the Christians. Sometimes as many as a hun-

dred and fifty out of the two hundred and fifty Christians around Sukulpura and Marpha were being given work to help them eke out a livelihood. The Christians came to believe that when the Mission failed to help them thus, they were being ill-treated—i. e. divorced from their caste and then abandoned by the Mission. The establishment of the large orphanage at Patpara, too, helped to create in the minds of the Christian forces the belief that “Christians must be provided for”,—the provision referred to being both spiritual and material. When I spoke to one of the strongest of the present Christian Indian leaders asking him what one thing was needed above all others before the Church could advance in Gondwana, he answered, “We must, first of all, make our Christians economically independent, so that other people will look on them as a firmly established and well to do community”.

The difficulty of shepherding the scattered Christian community was the second great problem. In 1902 there were Christians in 40 villages. If ten of these are discounted as being villages in which Christian workers were living, but in which there were no local Christians, there still remain about thirty villages scattered over the hills and valleys of that forest country. To shepherd these, instruct them, hold divine service with them, give them Holy Communion, was a task which was found to be very onerous. Missionary after missionary refers to it. Many of these villages had only one or two families living in them. In 1901 out of 42 villages with Christians in them 16 had only one resident Christian, who was usually a man but sometimes a woman or a child. As far as shepherding was concerned, either the Christian movement had to gain greater numbers so that groups of at least five to ten families could meet together regularly for worship and instruction, or the movement was headed for stagnation and defeat. Under some specially devoted missionaries these far flung groups could be shepherded, but when furloughs occurred, or illness intervened, or the rains descended and the floods came, the farther groups went without care. The records give instances of Herculean efforts at care.

It is significant that as far as the records go, no local men were employed as leaders of the Christian groups. Had the movement continued to grow after 1902, so that there were ever enlarging groups of Christians, the small group movements in each of the four castes might have remained vital. When the difficulty of shepherding, combined with the famine-born paternalism, and other causes, stopped these early hopeful group movements amongst the Pankas, Baigas, Dhulias, and Gonds the attention of the Mission turned more and more to making provision for the existent Christians—provision both material and spiritual. The heavy responsibilities of the orphanage, tended to make the center of the mission at Patpara and Mandala, whereas the center of responsibility and opportunity for ingathering of converts and producing a continuing Church, was at Marpha and further to the east, 80 miles from Mandala. This change did not take place without a struggle. A series of Annual Reports call attention to the fact that Marpha was being left uncared for, and plead for adequate forces to staff the eastern field.

A significant set of figures is the following. There have been 1272 baptisms in the forty-one years 1891-1931. Of these 958 have been in childhood—children of Christians, or orphans. The remainder, 314 only, represent the total number of adult converts from the Pankas, Baigas, Gonds, Dhulias, Kols and other castes.

Following 1903 it is difficult to trace exactly what happened. Mr. Hodgkinson, writing 25 years later, states that in 1901 "fatal rot" set in and decline started. It is certain that the growth of the Church remained approximately stationary for several years, rising very gradually (with the baptism of the Patpara orphans?) to 784 in 1913. After this, numbers decline to 554 in 1921, and back up to 660 in 1935. The period of growth ended with 1903. There were six and a half hundred then. There are six and a half hundred now.

A great deal has been said about the reversions in this area. The total adult reversions probably do not number more than a hundred, and may be not more than

sixty. The reversions occurred during a period when baptisms in the orphanage made good the losses, so that at no time was there a significant decline in numbers. The reversions were not clean cut either. Those who "reverted" bore such a relationship to the Church that some years they were counted as Christians and some years they were not. They were carried for years with the hope that with increased shepherding facilities they could be won back into the fold. Though the numbers concerned were small, the importance of the reversions was great. They took place in the area where group movements were in progress. They did not stop ingathering. They merely proved that the Christian movement had been defeated.

A realistic consideration of this field from the point of view of natural growth along caste lines requires that the figures be considered in two blocks. In the first fall the stations of Mandala, Patpara, and Deori. In the second fall Marpha, Sukulpura, and the surrounding villages. In the first there have never been any appreciable number of indigenous Christians. The term "indigenous Christian" will be used for converts who continue to live amongst their people, to follow their ancestral occupation, to remain in organic connection with their own caste people, and who in consequence are able to spread their new found religion amongst their caste fellows. Mandala has always been an urban station with no indigenous Christians in the town or nearby villages. Patpara is a typical Mid-India mission station, whose principal work through the years has been the orphanage and boarding school. There have been practically no indigenous Christians in the villages nearby. Deori is a Christian land colony typical of the post-famine period in Mid-India. There are indications that years ago, when Deori was first founded there were indigenous Christians in six or eight nearby villages. But with the coming of the Christian colony, these indigenous Christians either were pulled into the central land colony, or died out or moved away. This soon left Deori as a land settlement of non-typical people, orphanage boys and girls, out of organic connection with the people round about them.

Spiritually all three stations have been sterile. They have not won to Christ groups of men and women in the surrounding villages. This is not attributable to moral depravity or spiritual ignorance. On the whole the Christians of these stations know the Christian religion, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and live sober and God-fearing lives. But it is directly attributable to the fact that the group as a group is dependent upon the Mission and is out of contact with its neighbors. They have been moulded by the orphanage-mission combination into a type of people who are so different from their neighbors that they do not and probably cannot mingle with them in an effective way.

In the second group of stations there were many indigenous Christians. Around Marpha and Sukulpura there were two or three hundred men, women, and children (an adult community of a hundred and fifty at the peak) who resided in the villages, out away from the mission stations, in organic contact with their people, knowing of scores of Non-Christian relatives, and carrying on their ancestral occupations. In 1898 the Marpha-Sukulpura field had 202 Christians in it; while the Patpara-Mandala field had 30. That is, in 1898 there were 202 indigenous Christians in organic connection with their Non-Christian relatives and castefellows. In 1936 the proportion is about reversed. Though exact numbers cannot be given, it will give a true picture of the situation to say that in 1898 the vast majority of Christians were those for whom, because of being in intimate contact with their caste fellows, spiritual reproduction was possible; while in 1936 the vast majority of Christians in this area are those for whom, because they are in mission settlements, and because they have lost contact with their relatives and are looked on as a different caste of people, spiritual reproduction is, if not impossible, at least very difficult.

It may be taken as axiomatic in any mission field that the hope of growth lies not in assiduous care of communities of non-indigenous Christians, but rather in

starting and tending Christian movements in some approachable caste or castes. Applying this general truth to the Mandala field we may say that the hope of the Mandala field lies in reviving or starting afresh some caste-wise movement or movements amongst the Pankas, Dhulias, Gonds, Baigas, Kols, Lalbegies, or other approachable caste. A thorough study of the Mandala field from the point of view of past or present group movements would call for a study of the village areas around Marpha, Diwari, Bargaon, Sukulpura, and Titrahi. A rewarding task to the present mission forces would be a further investigation of how the four or five caste-wise movements in that area started, spread, became arrested and in some cases were wiped out. The numbers of Christians in the Marpha field, reported from year to year, give no certain clue to the growth or decay of the movement, because the figures were not accurate. For three years identically the same figures were reported. However the figures are as follows: 1898—202; 1903 and following year by year—340, 290, 335, 367, 278, 173, 173, 173, 306. No figures are available after 1913.

The bearing of educational policy on ingathering is to be noted. The C. M. S. Gond Mission has stressed education, as have most missions of the Mid-India area. Schools were started partly to care for small groups of Christian children in various villages. One or two Christian families seem to have been a sufficient number to justify a school being placed in that village. It was hoped that the school and the masters would bring in other converts. These schools were also carried on in villages where there were no Christians. In 1917 there were 507 Non-Christian students in 16 schools. Six of these schools had no Christian pupils. Six of them had less than four Christian pupils. This probably means that there were 12 schools carried on in villages where there were no Christian children other than the teachers' own. Such a system of schools endured for many years. The experience here harmonizes exactly with the experience of other missions. Schools for non-Christians do not produce converts, do not lead to

the establishment of the Church. Nowhere in Mid-India have we found an instance of where ingathering followed extensive educational work done amongst Non-Christian boys and girls. The school as an evangelistic agency in Mid-India has not succeeded. It is to be noted that, except where mass movements are actually in process, nowhere in all India have primary schools initiated the Christianization of any widespread group of people.

MAKING STERILE AREAS FERTILE.

A sterile area is one in which the growth of the Church is taking place largely through the rearing of Christians in orphanages on the one hand, and through the conversion of individuals from various castes on the other hand. In both cases the resulting Christians become members of a loosely integrated, isolated community of non-typical people. Growth is very slow in a sterile area, and very costly. To change a sterile area into a fertile area means getting a different type of growth started, growth by natural conversions of adults in some approachable caste or castes, adults who remain on in their homes, doing their ancestral tasks, and continuing in organic connection with their non-Christian caste fellows. This type of growth is called group movement or mass movement growth.

The whole question of how mass movements start in a heretofore sterile areas is a very complicated one. In the brief compass of this report all that can be attempted is a few rather incomplete suggestions indicating tentative conclusions arising from examination of many mission stations in Mid-India from the view-point of mass movement growth. The recommendations given below should be considered as an attempt to indicate how the second type of ingathering may be initiated in the Mandala Mission Field.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

If the painstaking and loving care which has been taken of the six hundred Christians of the Mandala district (care which involves not only spiritual

oversight of the Church, but also a great deal of material assistance, of laborious supervision of land settlements, of employment of considerable numbers both as servants of mission or missionaries and as co-workers in the Christian enterprise) is continued in the future, the existing Church of about six hundred people may be kept alive indefinitely,—as long, indeed, as funds and faith hold out. With excellent care and the expenditure of considerable funds, the community might even grow, by excess of births over deaths, to seven or eight hundred in the next twenty years. If this provision, either material or spiritual, ceases or diminishes, the existing community is apt to migrate, die, disperse, and dwindle gradually away.

But since the future of Missions holds out little hope that material care can be continued year after year in the future, it would seem that before the Mandala Christian Church, as before every Christian Church, there are but two alternatives; (1), to dwindle slowly away with the gradual decrease of foreign funds; (2), to initiate and nurture Christian movements in some approachable caste or castes, thus becoming strongly rooted in the land.

It scarcely needs to be said that the latter is the course to choose. Fortunately the existing Christian community is not completely divorced from the surrounding people. The Christians still know from which caste they have come. A few of them still have relatives, whom they know and visit. This condition will rapidly cease to exist, for as the years pass the Christians who were themselves converts will die, their children will marry the children of Christians, and the Christians will lose organic touch with their former communities, castes or tribes. Since every passing year makes divorcement more complete now is the time to strike. For the Christian community the natural door to expansion is the door to the homes of relatives and caste fellows. Every effort should be made to lead the Christians to win their relatives. Every relative won is a means to the winning of others of that caste. "So he went and told his brother, 'we have found the Christ'", is still the most certain way in which the Christian religion is spread.

However, 'winning my relatives to Jesus Christ' has a definite and unfortunate connotation for the non-typical, dislocated, orphanage-reared Christians of these areas. It means extracting some needy man or woman from his caste and from his village, giving him land or a job in the mission station, usually at mission or missionary expense, educating his children in the mission boarding schools, and making him a part of the non-indigenous Christian group. As long as this picture of what Christianization means dominates the mind of any Christian, he will find it exceedingly difficult to win anyone to Christ, and he will find it almost impossible to start a normal group movement to Christ.

Further-more 'becoming a Christian' in these sterile areas of India has a definite and unfortunate connotation for the non-Christian peasant or labourer. It means renouncing one's race (caste), leaving one's home, separating forever from one's relatives, marrying into a conglomerate assortment of famine orphans, becoming dependent on a kindly but foreign organization which, of recent years, does not seem quite equal to the job of providing for the existing Christians. As long as this picture of what it means to become a Christian dominates the minds of the people of the approachable castes, it is difficult for anyone of them to accept the Saviour, and it is impossible for any of them to start a vital mass movement to Christ.

On the contrary, where both Christians and non-Christians, know that becoming a Christian normally means coming with one's family and caste fellows, living on in the same homes, doing the same work, marrying chiefly amongst one's own caste people (those who have become Christian), earning one's own livelihood by the sweat of one's own brow, and organizing a Church "of our people, by our people and for our people", there the message of a Redeemer from sin can be accepted with gladness and by enough people so that that a Church is established, and grows greatly year by year.

Consequently, if the existing Christian community is going to become evangelistically potent, it should erase from its own mind the picture, gradually built up over

the last forty years, of a Christianization which divorces from the normal life of the district; and should paint in vivid colours on the canvas of its imagination a Christianization of the sort which actually exists in every genuine mass movement area. This will not be done merely by exhortations to go out and evangelize. It will be done as the leaders of the people get this vision themselves, and place it continually before the people; as the leaders tell scores or hundreds of stories each one illustrating the normal way in which the Christians movement grows, the way in which peasants and labourers become indigenous Christians; as the leaders conduct institutes for voluntary lay evangelists, both men and women, where these men and women will be taught in detail how to win their relatives, caste fellows and approachable-caste neighbors; as the leaders teach the Church that the ideal is not to extract an individual and unite him to the existing artificial Christian community, but is rather to win a whole caste in all the villages of a given valley, a given tahsil or district, to have a Church built by the people themselves in every village, to have leaders from amongst the people themselves, and to let the light of Jesus Christ shine in the hearts of tens of thousands of people in this generation.

The Mission can help the Christian Church in this task by pointing out which are the most open castes. At present it would seem that the Lalbegis in the larger towns are an open caste. The Pankas throughout the district while forming but four percent of the total population are the group from amongst which most Christians have come and from which large numbers of Christians may be expected to come in the future. The Baigas are also four percent of the population, and used to yield a fair share of converts. The Gonds have never yet yielded many converts; but as an aboriginal people emerging into consciousness of their power and place, and as people forming 46 percent of the total population of the area, they must be regarded as an approachable caste. It might pay to send two devout Christian workers to the Gond mass movement in the Nirmal field of

the British Methodist Church in North Hyderabad to see what is happening there and to report the same in fervent faith in a thousand villages in Mandala District.

This brings us to a consideration of the part which the present paid mission workers,—teachers and evangelists, pastors and compounders, missionaries and Indians,—can play in starting normal caste-wise ingathering, i. e. Christian mass movements. The paid staff can do a great deal. It cannot only lead the Church, but on its own it can do a tremendous amount of evangelism, of the sort calculated to start mass movement and amongst castes where mass movements can start. Amongst paid workers also it is of vital importance that the picture of "Christianization by extraction" be seen clearly and rejected completely; while the picture of "Christianization by carefully controlled group movements" be seen as clearly as if the entire paid mission staff were working in midst of the living growing church in Dornakal diocese.

Unfortunately the difficulty of educating the Christian community to the newer point of view plus the fact that the non-Christian community in the immediate vicinity of Christian stations has thoroughly learned the wrong lesson during the past fifty years, makes it difficult for a powerful mass movement to start near a mission station. It is not impossible for it to do so, but it is difficult. Thus there is a good deal to be said for a certain amount of evangelistic work in virgin territory.

A point of view which has been found helpful is the following. Any Christianization starts with the conversion of an individual. It is normal to expect that with a renewed emphasis on evangelism there will be a number of adult conversions in the Mandala district in the coming years. If these converts are treated in one way they will certainly become members of the existing Christian community, thus being saved as individuals but lost as potential evangelists to their castefellows. If these are treated in another way, (that is, if the sum total treatment meted out to them, conscious and unconscious, is of another sort) they will not only be saved as individuals but they will be much more likely to start small group

movements. As these small group movements, of three to five close relatives, started by individual converts, are properly treated, they may grow to large group movements of, let us say, five hundred adults in from two to ten villages. These large group movements in turn properly treated will become mass movements and vital Christian Churches. The Mid-India area gives hundreds of instances of individual converts lost as potential evangelists, scores of small group movements which were stopped before becoming large group movements, and about a dozen large group movements which were arrested in their development and failed of becoming powerful mass movements. We have had it borne in upon our consciousness that the most precious gift God gives into the hands of the Christian forces of any area is the individual convert from an approachable caste, who wins his own relatives. He is a pearl of great price. When found, most Missions can afford to give to him the best missionary available, to work with him at the task of making his small group movement into a large group movement, and his large group movement into a driving victorious mass movement, building a great Christian Church. The task before the C. M. S. Gond Mission is finding such men and with them building the Church in Gondwana.

To guard against misapprehensions, it will be well to state that there can be no question but that the growth of the Church is the doing of God, not of men. Mass Movements are dependent on the Holy Spirit, not on any method. Still the Holy Spirit is not a spirit of disorder. As we see the way in which He has led untold thousands into the Church through mass movements, as we ponder on the fact that the only way in which revival has come to any part of India has been through caste-wise Christian movements, we are led to believe that the Holy Spirit desires great ingathering everywhere, and that it is our part to find out how the Church has grown in other areas and to apply that knowledge to our own field. In a similar way, the central abiding message of Christian revelation is that sinful men can be saved through the sacrifice of Christ. We are resolved to preach but one

thing, and that is Redemption through the Cross. And yet by our preaching and by the on-going life of our mission stations, the Non-Christian brethren all around are learning "Christianization by extraction", which hardens their hearts against the central message. The clothes in which we dress the central truth must help people to accept it, not hinder them from entering the Kingdom. Believing fully in the spiritual nature of our task, and in the preeminence of Christ, this report pleads for a way of presentation which will permit the redemptive power of the cross to reach every hamlet and every heart in all Gondwana.

To summarize; If the church is to exist, it must grow through caste-wise ingathering. To bring about caste-wise ingathering there are now two forces in the field: the Indian Church, and the paid Mission Staff. If these forces are to initiate group movements, they must erase the existing conception of what it means to become a Christian and substitute for it a lively understanding of what will actually take place in Mandala district when a mass movement, properly controlled and nurtured, starts in some of the castes there. A very important function therefore of the leadership of the Christian enterprise is to take all manner of means to remove the old conception and build in the new. Another very important function is to cause evangelistic work along mass movement lines, caste-wise lines to be done, both on the paid basis and on the unpaid basis. Finally, trusting in God, and believing that it is His will that multitudes should be saved, it is our privilege to apply to this area the lessons learned elsewhere as to how the Holy Spirit has brought multitudes of men and women to repentance and salvation.

The establishment of the Church in Mid-India requires the greatest care so that the function of the ministry, missionary and Indian, may never come to be merely that of "caring for hereditary Christians". The critical step to be taken in Mandala, as in many Mid-India fields, is the initiation, either with or without the aid of the existing Indian church in that district, of virile group movements in approachable castes.

CHAPTER X

THE MEHRA MASS MOVEMENT

Geography. Bastar State, about 164 miles long and 128 miles wide, lies south of Dhamtari and Raipur and west of Chanda and Sironcha, and reaches to within a few miles of the coastal plain running north east from Guntur to Cuttack. The eastern part of Bastar State is an upland plateau, very similar to the plateau of Chhota Nagpur. Great sal forests occupy the high ground and the fertile low lands are occupied by villages. The western and southern parts of the State are very mountainous, and densely forested. The upland plateau of Jeypore State is a continuation of the upland plateau of Bastar State. No natural barrier intervenes.

Population. The total population is just over 500,000. Of this 64% are Gonds of the Maria and Muria tribes. The other 36% is made up of a variety of castes. The Marias inhabit the hills in the west and south and thin out toward the eastern edge. The Mehras are an untouchable caste whose center of density lies in Jeypore State but who are fairly numerous in the eastern part of Bastar. They thin out toward the west, as the Marias and Murias increase. There has been considerable immigration into Bastar State and this seems destined to increase with the coming years. Land is cheap and the farmers of the outer country are more thrifty and hard working than those of the state itself, so probably they will push in and displace the original inhabitants in the years to come.

Mission Work. The Rev. C. B. Ward, an independent missionary, started the Bastar State work in 1893. Growth began soon. Figures earlier than 1905 are not available but after that the following figures give an idea of the growth of the Christian community.

1905 728 Of this community of 3882 about 800 is now
 1910 1189 and probably has for years been living at the
 1918 1826 central station, Jagdalpur, where there is a
 1923 2710 Christian community of 100 houses or more—
 1927 2848 Jangalpara or Frazerpur—a hospital, a middle
 1931 2920 school, two boardings each with about 40 stu
 1934 3882 dents, and two bungalows. There is a fine
 big church. The remainder of the Christian population
 lives in 250 villages scattered all over Jagdalpur tahsil.

The Mass Movements.

All the evidence seems to be that the origin of the Jagdalpur Tahsil mass movements is to be found outside of Bastar State. The Bastar State mass movements are a continuation of the Mehra mass movement of the Schleswig Holstein Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Kotapad in Jeypore State. At Kasturi on the eastern borders of Bastar State an elderly Christian said, "A Kotapad guru (evangelist) taught five of us. We went to Kotapad to be baptized. Goliyar Sahab told us that since we were of Bastar State he would not baptize us. He gave us a letter to Ward Sahab (Papa Sahab) who then baptized us." Timothy at Kasturi was asked "When you were thinking of becoming Christians did you not fear that you would not be able to obtain wives for your sons and husbands for your daughters?" He answered "No, Sahab, because we knew that thousands were becoming Christians over Kotapad way." Cornelius of Nangur said, "I grew up in Silpari near Kotapad. Many of my relatives had become Christian. Then I came here and married. When the gods got after and kept after my first son and finally ate him up, and then when they got after my second son and he nearly died, my wife and I decided that we had better adopt this religion in which the gods and the spirits have no power." The forms of prayer too, and the Ooria songs are a direct carry over from the Lutheran way of doing things. The custom of calling the evangelist a guru is also Lutheran. It is significant that the number of villages in which there are Christians is greatest all along the eastern edge of Jagdalpur Tahsil, where it joins Jeypore State. The number of

Christians thins out toward the west and north; and though it is said that there are many Mehrahs in the Kondagaon Tahsil, there are few Christians there. All of which points to the Lutheran Mass Movement as being both the source of the Bastar State Mass Movement and its continuing inspiration.

At the same time, the Bastar State Mission has at no time been acutely aware of the Mehra Mass Movement. All the reports speak of the "aborigines becoming Christian," whereas the aborigines (Marias, Murias and other such tribes) have not become Christian. It is chiefly among the immigrant Mehrahs that Christianity has spread. A report dated 1910, states "We are working amongst the inhabitants (high castes) and the aborigines (wild tribes)." In none of the reports which I read is there any recognition of the successful Mehra mass movement to the immediate east as having any connection with or meaning for the Bastar State work. I hazard a guess that, through the years, preaching has been carried on in all parts of the villages indiscriminately, as much to those who never became Christian as to those who were becoming Christian. There was evidently more interest in the Marias and Murias than in the Mehrahs, though from the Marias in forty-three years there has been only one convert, and he reverted. There has been an opinion held by the missionary group—and possibly by the Indians—that in Bastar State caste distinctions were not important, that caste was not rigid, that while there were these separate groupings of course, they did not make much difference, and it was not important to follow them up. Actually the caste lines are rigidly drawn. The Mehrahs are outcastes and are looked down upon by the better caste—the Bhatras, Marias, and Murias. A Bhatra Malguzar said to us, "These Mehrahs are a low down lot, thieves, rascals, dirty, lying, and adulterous." Despite the failure to recognize the nature of the Christian movement, Christianity has spread almost exclusively amongst Mehrahs.

An interesting and important side issue is that while the main mass movement has been going on, three minor mass movements have occurred. From the Ghassias,

Mungias (Basors), and Mirgans, about 20 families each have been converted and are now living in the villages. One of the supervising ministers is from the Ghassias. Thus the mass movement has in its inception established the fact that Christianity is an intercaste movement. In Jeypore about 800 Bhatras have become Christians. This Bhatra movement however stopped years ago, allegedly because the rest of the Bhatras refused to identify themselves with what was predominantly a Mehra movement.

Because of the fact that the nature of the mass movement was not recognized, and because of the fact that the coming of people in groups was not stressed, and because of the fact that the Christian program has been weak, one finds the phenomenon of one and two Christian Mehra families in the midst of three to thirty Non-Christian Mehra families. There are Christians in 250 villages. In one circuit of 23 villages, Nangur, we asked the circuit leader to name his villages and to tell how many families in each were Christian and how many Non-Christian. His hasty calculation indicated that there were approximately 55 Christian families and 113 Non-Christian Mehra families. Case studies revealed plenty of Christians with Non-Christian parents, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, uncles, and aunts. Most Christians have Non-Christian relatives of the cousin and second cousin variety. The workers estimated that for the area as a whole about 30 per cent of the Mehra population has become Christian. This, I think, is an over estimation for the State as a whole, though it may be true for Jagdalpur Tahsil. They also judged that 30 per cent of the Ghassias have become Christian, that 50 per cent of the Mungias have become Christian and that only ten per cent of the Mirgans have become Christian. These mass movements have still plenty of scope for growth.

The Central Station Christian settlement, Jangalpara, has played an important part in the Christian movement. Lying at the doors of the missionaries' homes, it has demanded and received a large share of attention. Its problems have broken the hearts of the missionaries. Its children have in large part furnished the pupils at the

Central Station school. Into it have been gathered the dismissed workers, the people who fled from persecution, or who felt it more convenient to be in the mission station, and the graduates of the school who got jobs in Jagdalpur. It does not seem to have much connection with the villages—though it does have more than most central station settlements. There has been a lot of loose living in Jangalpara, partly due to old Mehra ways; and partly due to the release from village sanctions. Thus “the immorality of the Bastar State people” has loomed large in missionary thinking; and the solid morality of the majority of village Christians has not been held in the center of consciousness. That there is this solid morality is instanced by the following example. In Kasturi when Padre Bhan Singh questioned fifteen men of fifty and above, how many of them were living with their first wives, all replied in the affirmative, except two whose wives had died, whereupon they had remarried in the Church. None of them had had a wife who ran away with some other man.

The Central Boarding Schools (boys and girls) have served to educate the children of Jangalpara, and the children of workers, and to a very limited extent have educated village Christians’ children. Practically no boarding school graduate has returned to his village. Only a few of the fifteen or so workers are products of the Boarding Schools. The missionary in charge felt that for years the Boarding School has been a means of escape from the villages of Bastar State. It would be hard to prove that the Boarding School has strengthened the Christian movement in the 250 villages. Miss Fehr is however awake to the situation. She has some very profitable ideas in mind, amongst them that of using the Boardings, during such seasons as the villagers might come in to school, to provide the housing accommodation for adults in for short courses. The Jangalpara children also are being refused admission to the boarding, though their attendance at school is encouraged. This is a healthy sign.

The language problem is a central one. There are several current languages. Ooriya is spoken on the eastern border. Halbi, a mixture of Ooriya and Chhattisgarhi, is spoken by most people and some mission workers. The central Church pastor speaks Hindi. The hymns are partly Hindi and partly Ooriya. The missionaries use only Hindi. The schools use only Hindi. The Scripture is read sometimes in Hindi and sometimes in Ooriya. The village women understand Halbi only, getting a merest glimmering from Hindi. The men get more, but if conviction is to be carried and one's meaning is to be made plain, the language of the people must be used.

There are now six circuits as follows:—

Name of Circuit	In Charge	No. of villages	No. Christians
Kasturi	Padre Bhan Singh	70	828
Nangur	Padre Chaitan P. John	23	212
Karpound	Padre Phul Chand	80	1700
Jagdalspur	Padre Chatterji	{ 18 1(Jagdalspur)	{ 200 800
Keslur		22	128
Kondagaon		23	162

Each of the supervising ministers has several teachers or gurus working with him. Some circuits have one, some circuits have four or five.

The worship of the groups, with the exception of three or four centers such as Kasturi and Nangur, is rather primitive. The Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Commandments have been taught as baptismal requirements, but, not having been used often in worship, have in most cases been utterly forgotten. Even in the centers such as Daspal and Nangur and Kasturi where there are resident workers only a small fraction of the people know these elements well enough to say them with confidence. The idea of building church houses is new. Most worship services are held in village lanes, or the courtyards of some house, or wherever the preacher happens to be. In the better churches the hymns are lined out,—as are the creed and commandments. There seems to be no set order of worship which all alike follow. Padre Bhan

Singh and Padre Phul Chand have led out in getting people to build their own little Churches. At Nangur too is a village built Church. Padre Bhan Singh is advocating that in each village where there are Christians there should be a place of worship, and he points out the common custom in each village of building a "dev guri" where the villagers assemble to worship at festival times. These dev guris are thatched roofs on poles.

Giving is fairly general, but on a very meagre scale. The aim of two or three annas a year per family, whether that family be rich or poor, is set in one circuit. The workers are convinced that the people are very very poor and cannot give much. Since most of the Christians own land, keep pigs, and chickens, and do a bit of weaving, and since they have access to jungles for gathering mahuwa blossoms, roots and fruits and for grazing their cattle, the average income per family is probably quite good as compared with other mass movement areas. The value in rupees may be low, but the value in kind is probably above average.

Recommendations :

1. It is hard to overestimate the possibilities of ingathering. There seems to be no reason why the numbers of Christians should not double and treble in the very near future. The further spread of the movement to other tribes and castes is eminently possible. The Marias and Murias (64 per cent of the population) are going shortly to be in an emergent state. They should emerge into Christianity. The Mehras can become Christian without any persecution. If large numbers come in on a self supporting basis every additional convert makes the task of caring for the movement that much easier. The Christian force should therefore expect revival, pray for revival, work for revival. Only so can they fully cooperate with the Spirit of God who has created the wonderfully favourable situation now found in Bastar State.

2. In order to care for the revival, which will certainly break in the near future, the following steps are recommended. It is not intended that these should be understood as final and complete statements but rather as suggested lines of action. The local forces will doubtless originate many further plans of action, and possibly, better plans of action.

A. Understanding Mass Movements and Forwarding Ingathering

- a. An intensive study of "Christian Mass Movement in India". Every English speaking person should read and study this book till he knows it thoroughly. Its bearing on the situation is very great. Hindi classes once a month at the central station on "Christian Mass Movements" will be most valuable. In any short course for voluntary workers the basic truths and the illuminating stories of the Mass Movement Study should be taught an hour a day. A course in Mass Movements should certainly be taught to the A. V. Middle School boys and girls.
- b. The mass movement in Kotapad should be made the subject of careful study. A two weeks residence in Kotapad, with tours in the villages should be made at the earliest opportunity, so that the facts of that successful mass movement can be made available to the Bastar mass movement.
- c. Stories of how villages as a whole became Christian and how individuals became Christian because they knew thousands of others were becoming Christian should be printed and widely circulated.
- d. The expectation that all Mehras and all Ghassiyas and all Mirgans and all Mungias will shortly become Christians, the stories of the triumph of the gospel throughout

India, the knowledge that a time of revival is on in the Church should filter down to every Christian in Bastar State immediately and keep on filtering down.

- e. Every effort should be made to bring in groups as a whole, and the news of the coming in of five or ten families of Mehras, or all the rest of the Mehras in the village—should be made an occasion of rejoicing. Such news should be spread rapidly to all villages.
- f. Lists of relatives yet unsaved might well be made, and small groups in 100 villages pledged to pray for these by name each day might well be organized.

There is no doubt that as mass movements are understood, and as the above procedures are carried out, ingathering of very considerable proportions will take place.

B. Establishing Christian Worship.

- a. The aim should be to establish daily worship with a seventy-five per cent attendance in every village where five families or more are Christian, and to have 75% of the total membership attend weekly worship.
- b. This will require the printing of an order of worship and agreement as to the language and the way in which the various elements of that worship service will be used. All the clergy should memorize the entire service and be able to use it anywhere without a book. It should be the frame on which daily worship and Sunday worship is organized.
- c. To begin with, the passages ought to be lined out, but very soon they ought to be repeated in unison. To this end, when printing the service, dashes or commas ought to be put at those places where in unison repetition all will

pause. Thus: "Our Father—who art in heaven—hallowed be Thy name—Thy Kingdom come".

- d. The idea of a consecrated place of worship in every village where there are Christians, even if that be merely a raised platform should be greatly stressed. Here the Christians will gather for worship daily, led by the voluntary lay leader. Here whenever the circuit rider comes, service will be held. This will be kept clean by the women, and decorated by them on all festive occasions. The cross and other symbols can be used.
- e. The matter of attendance is important. No one should think fifteen per cent attendance is the best possible. A high standard of attendance can be achieved. It would be a good idea to require each preacher and each local leader to record the percentage of attendance at each meeting he holds. Thus: Total Christians in Bhelwabhata 10—at meeting 9 i. e. 90%.

Total Christians in Nangur 100—at meeting 15 i. e. 15%.

The Church can increase attendance if it but will.

- f. The fact that the villager is illiterate must guide all worship plans. The villager must understand the service. He must participate in the service. It must be his service. This means a limited selection of hymns and tunes, but those known thoroughly and sung with zeal and joy. This means a very limited memory curriculum but that known thoroughly and used constantly. This means a guide to the local leader and preacher as to what Bible material to read and on what topics to preach.

C. Training Leaders.

- a. The immediate need, if ingathering is to be successful, is to train a large number of strong local leaders who will be entirely unpaid, but who will know their task. Each unpaid, local

leader should know the worship service by heart, should be committed to building a Church, should believe in and practice stewardship, and should have a vivid idea of a great Mehra church leading all Bastar State to the feet of Christ. These four major ideas if instilled into fifty strong village leaders this spring ought to undergird a great ingathering in the present year. It would naturally be expected that these leaders would take over a large share of the work of instructing the new converts, and leading them in daily worship. It is fortunate that there is an existing voluntary leadership amongst these people. These leaders are called Nayaks and Payaks. On the basis of this indigenous system an enlightened Christian leadership can be built.

- b. A short course for paid workers and voluntary workers is therefore the immediate need. It should be held for as long a time as possible. Probably this year a two weeks course would be feasible but if this could be stretched out to one month it would be even better. If possible a women's section too ought to be held. In a month's course it should be possible to teach many to read by the Laubach method.
- c. The Church however needs more than part time voluntary workers. It needs workers who are literate, who will be supported by the people themselves, who come of the people themselves, and who live Bastar State style. To this end young men, such as Banbasi of Kasturi, should be sought out, and brought in to Jagdalpur for six months training. When they come in to Jagdalpur they should understand clearly that they are pledged to go back to a village center, preferably one which has agreed already to contribute generously (Rupees two per year per family or equivalent in grain. This is an average. Some family will give ten, some one.) to

the support of a pastor-teacher. They should understand that their living will depend largely and shortly entirely upon the villagers themselves, the Mission giving at first a small grant to supplement what a group of fifty families perhaps cannot yet give. The training and successful location of twenty such workers in the next two years, and the training of much larger numbers in the immediate future is a necessity.

- d. In certain places teachers are already at work in Maria villages drawing their entire support from the people. Every effort should be expended toward getting Christian teachers similarly located in Christian groups. The principal difficulty so far seems to be that Christians have the tradition of everything being done for them. It would be well worth while to describe accurately the Madras system of grant in aid to the Educational Service of the State and petition the establishment of such a grant in aid system in Bastar. This would gradually make it possible for teacher-preachers, whose work has so wonderfully strengthened the Church in the Andra country, to be established throughout Bastar State.

D. Self Support.

- a. As ingathering takes place, it should be done on the basis of self support. As people come in let them know that Christians give largely. New villages especially can and should be led to give largely. To some extent this means the conversion of the existing Christian community to self support. But in larger measure it means that new conditions are laid down for those who become Christians from now on. All preaching should include vivid descriptions of self support, people proud of self support, people refusing to be beggars, people building their

own Churches, the Mehra people on fire with a sense of mission, and called of God to build the New Jerusalem on the highlands of Bastar State.

- b. Means and methods of achieving self support. God's ghara, God's acre, a tenth of the chickens, and pigs, and rice, and earnings are all good.
- c. Even more essential, however, is getting some workers whose income is solely dependent on the gifts of the people. As long as the people know that the Mission will not let "its" worker suffer, they will not give. Why should they give ?
- d. The basic fact that the Christians of Bastar State are comparatively well off needs to replace the existing thought that the Bastar people are the poorest people in India. Measured in kind their condition is probably superior to that of many mass movement Christians.

E. Concentration on Villages. The future of the Christian Movement in Bastar State is in the villages. It is not in Jangalpara. The center of attention then should not be Jangalpara but the villages. Jangālpāra ought to get no more attention and time and prayer and worry than any other four hundred or five hundred of the Christian community receive. Indeed, it should get less since it has in its literate educated membership a far greater potential leadership. Jangalpara ought to be committed into the hands of some capable leader who will have complete control and responsibility, with consultation concerning local problems no more often than Padre Bhan Singh or Padre Phul Chand at Kasturi and Kirpaund have. The emancipation of the mission forces from the central station settlement is very essential. It will not come naturally. It must be consciously sought.

F. The Marias and Murias.

The immediate task is the extention of the Kingdom amongst the Mehras, and the building of a strong,

self supporting, constantly worshipping Church from amongst these "Untouchables." Toward this end 95 per cent of the time and attention of the Christian forces should go. The hope of the extension of the Kingdom lies principally in the establishment of that Church. The surest way to win the Marias and Murias is to build a victorious Mehra church. I should deprecate any diversion of energy to an effort to win the aborigines at the present time. The program for the immediate future is a program whose purpose is to win the 70—90 per cent of the unreached Mehras, to spread the Christian movement with power to the Kondegaon Tahsil, to follow the Mehra converts into every village, to win every Ghassia, every Mungia, every Mirgan.

At the same time, the challenge of the Maria and Muria Gonds must weigh on the heart. At present their Hinduization is going on apace in the larger centers. Of their youth 585 are reading in government schools manned by Hindu teachers. There should be prayer for the Marias and Murias. The hope of extending the Kingdom among them must be kept before the Mehra Christians. Their sense of mission must be sharpened in the direction of these Gond tribes. They must come to believe that God in His wisdom has destined them, the lowly Mehras, to bring the great Marias and Murias to Christ. A watch should be kept and prayer offered for the Maria Dit, for the Muria Venkaya. The Christian policemen, and Forest Officers, and school teachers might well be called in for a three day conference and the burden laid upon their hearts. The story of the start of the Gond work, south of Chanda, should become common property throughout the scattered educated Christian community in Bastar State. Yet all this ought to be done as a side issue, with a minute per cent of the energy and attention—five per cent is probably too great. Tours amongst the Marias and Murias, preaching in their mohullas to the neglect of the Mehra Mohullas would be a great error at the present time.

Conclusion. This Mission with a growing Mehra Church at its doors, with fifteen workers, two boarding schools, a new insight into how great populations are Christianized, having a great successful mass movement as its next door neighbor, faces a brilliant future. God will use the Mission to bring in thousands. The call is to understand mass movements, and to organize a Church which will help first the Mehras and then others to reconstruct their lives around Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION—HOW THE CHURCH GROWS IN MID INDIA

D. A. McGavran.

The growth of the Church in these nine areas should be studied against two backgrounds. On the one hand are the great Churches of Chhota Nagpur, the Sialkot District, Hyderabad, and Tinnavelly; and on the other are the all too many areas where 100 years of Christian Missions has not succeeded in planting a Church which multiplies of itself. As one contemplates Mid-India in the light of these two kinds of Church Growth he will, we believe, find himself drawn to the following point of view concerning the topic which is central in all these studies—namely the way in which the Church grows.

A basic assumption is that God prepares certain races of men to accept His Word. The Biblical illustrations of this truth are too obvious to require rehearsal. It is impossible to imagine the growth of the Christian religion without the Chosen People, the Selected Race, the Hebrew Caste. This is obviously true as regards the spread of the Church amongst the Chosen People, the approachable caste, during the years of grace 33—60. The condition of the Roman Empire, the state of civilization, and the unique contribution of the Greeks also conspire to make one believe that God prepares certain nations, castes, tribes or peoples to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Chhindwara Conference in April 1935 after a careful and prayerful consideration of the situation stated its convictions on this point in the following terms. "It appears reasonable to us to believe that if ingathering is to take place according to the will of God in Mid India it will

be amongst those castes who have elsewhere turned to Jesus Christ. Castes which have come elsewhere are probably the approachable castes in Mid India. If evangelism is to bear the richest fruit, this basic assumption must be considered in all its varied aspects." Just as it is true that certain individuals because of elements in their lives are more susceptible to the Gospel than are certain others, so certain races, or castes, because of elements in their lives are more responsive to the Gospel than others. If the Gospel is preached in these castes chains of individual conversions may be expected, and a Church will be built up in which social solidarity has not been impaired. That God has prepared certain races practically never means that the entire race of say forty thousand people become Christian in name on a certain day. It does mean, however, that the attitude of the caste is such that today a group of five families is baptized after instruction, and that ten months later ten other families, all relatives of these first five families, and all convinced of the superiority of the Christian Faith are also baptized. Thus the movement grows amongst the caste, or castes prepared by God for exodus from the land of bondage and sin.

As the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached by newcomers or foreigners, as it always must be in the beginning, it is received with curiosity, courtesy, anger, or ridicule as the case may be, but always with a very partial understanding of what it means. If the person preaching is a foreign missionary fighting against the heavy handicap of an imperfect knowledge of the language, customs, beliefs, and traditions of a complex civilization, then the lack of understanding is magnified. Some time, possibly some years, may pass before any one will place sufficient faith on this reputed Saviour to entrust his own life and death to Him. Sooner or later, however, a man or woman is converted. In a few more years five to fifty others have followed the first one. If a majority of these are from one race, one caste or one social group the preacher has found the people prepared by God.

What is done to and with those first few converts is a matter of critical importance. Persecution in some form may be assumed. It will be difficult for the convert to continue in his old home and to earn his living at his old occupation. If the force of circumstances drives him away from his people and his means of livelihood, so that the matter ends by his becoming financially dependent on the Mission, which proceeds to make provision for his employment; then, whatever statements to the contrary be made, men will believe that becoming a Christian means being cared for by the benevolent mission. If the employment offered is that of preaching the Gospel, the conclusion will be drawn (doubtless unjustly in most cases) that becoming a Christian is, at least in great part, a means to a livelihood. If in addition to the converts, orphans are now taken in to mission orphanages, and a few of the blind, the lame and the halt are accepted in various types of benevolent homes, the impression will become indelible that becoming a Christian means adopting a new and kindlier "father and mother"; and that only the indigent, the orphans, the naked, hungry or homeless become Christian, i. e. that only those whose stomach is benefitted ever become Christian. That this impression is a false one will make no difference. It will be believed just the same.

It is possible, in absolutely untouched areas, where the walls of opposition tower up into the sky, that making and accepting this kind of convert, trying to weed out those who come for jobs and for bread, but accepting those who seem sincere and making provision for them, may be the only way to proceed. We recognize that there are such places. But we are convinced that no mission in Mid-India need to work in such areas or among such people. Furthermore a consideration of the ultimate outcomes in the type of Church created, will convince most people that it is better to spend ten years preaching the gospel, accepting no individual converts, working and waiting and praying for a group of people to become Christian together,

enduring persecution, receiving no financial aid from the mission, continuing in their former occupations and former homes, and looking to Jesus the Author and Perfector of their Faith; rather than to permit the other "conversion pattern" to be established. The most normal way for a spiritual movement to start is for a man to be converted and to bring his group with him. In certain castes this is more possible than in others.

However in Mid-India the above discussion is more or less academic, for in Mid-India there are very few virgin territories. In most of them the established tradition is the "Central Station Tradition," described again and again in this volume. What is to be done in such territories? While we emphasize that there is no cure all formula and no substitute for seeking the will of God, we believe that some such steps as the following will lead to the establishment of a growing Church.

First, while the dangers of this tradition have been stressed, it is to be remembered that Christianization-by-Extraction has created a Christian Community which in comparison to its origins is a miracle. This miracle is not hid from the world. Its witness is clear cut that Christianity saves. To be sure the salvation understood by this witness is too often in terms of a full stomach, education, physical health or freedom from oppression; and Christianity is in these stations too often conceived by observers as a mixture of mission money, mission schools, mission hospitals, the Bible and a new benevolent Lord called Jesus Christ. The cart is placed before the horse; and the fruits of the Christian life are mistaken for the life itself. Still the community can be counted on as a Christian Community.

Second, to this Christian Community, in which are many devout men and women, actively longing for the spread of God's Kingdom, should be given the facts concerning the growth of the Church by group movements in a given caste or race prepared by God. The

light shed abroad by the Mass Movement Study should be made available in the vernacular in every Christian Church where the Christianization-by-Extraction pattern has been established. The Mass Movement described in Acts should be carefully studied. Vernacular editions of "Christian Mass Movements in India" should be taught at Annual Institutes. Those who exhibit an earnest desire to bring men and women to the changed life in Jesus Christ, should be sent to visit Andhra Desh or some other successful mass movement area and given abundant opportunity to speak on their return. Teams from some adjacent mass movement area should be brought into the territory to tell of the victories of Christ amongst a given people. The existing Christian community ought to be led to see that group ingathering is not only a desirable way of Christianization, but where it is possible—and we believe it to be possible in most places in Mid-India,—it is a more desirable way than Christianization-by-Extraction. The existing Christian Community should be led to realize this.

Third, as the Christian Community comes to recognize the goal to be aimed at—a group ingathering from amongst some approachable caste—voluntary witnessing to one's faith, voluntary evangelism should be stressed. The existing Church should be led out into fervent soul winning. The relatives of existing Church members furnish the most natural objective. They are usually the most approachable people to whom we can go. "Relatives Day" or "Relatives' Week" can be observed. Special letters to relatives can be printed leaving spaces for the sender to sign his own name and to write in the name of the uncle, aunt, cousin, or in-law to whom he is sending the missive. Such letters will usually have to be taken in person to the relatives concerned and read aloud to them. Since the people whom God has prepared for exit from Egypt are frequently the people from whom through the years individuals have been converted, a planned, persistent campaign amongst relatives year after year, is often the best approach to the prepared castes. If in any given

station the Christians are at a loss to know which are the castes from whom large ingathering is likely, the following two considerations may be borne in mind: (a) As we have said, the castes from which in other parts of this land great Churches have arisen are likely to be the prepared castes in any given locality. These castes are the major castes of the Depressed Classes and the Aboriginal Tribes. (b) If the evangelistic force of any station will answer the question "From which of the castes in our district does the birth of a Church of thirty thousand in thirty years seem most possible? (or least impossible!!)", then by writing the name of that one caste on a piece of paper and counting the ballots one can generally determine which are the two or three most approachable castes. However determined, it is amongst these prepared castes that the Church should be led to witness.

Fourth, together with the concentration of voluntary church effort on the approachable peoples (and this may take several years to accomplish), the full time church or mission workers—missionaries, teachers, compounders, preachers, Bible women—in the evangelistic aspect of their duties can be led almost immediately to concentrate on the castes who are already responding to the word of release. Evangelistic efforts should be redoubled. This is a day to reallocate resources of money and men, throwing into evangelism more and more workers. If a great famine were to sweep the land, we would immediately throw into orphanages double or treble our present allotments. There is no physical famine, where people know themselves to be dying of hunger; but there is a spiritual famine in this land where tens of thousands of people know themselves to be suffering from spiritual starvation. The call is to minister the Word of God to people who are responding and who will respond. Even care of the existing Christian Community, unless that care demonstrably results in numerical growth, must be curtailed in order to provide resources to take the Word

of Release to the captives. Such a procedure will often be found to be the most certain way to spiritual revival in the existing Church. We must double and redouble our evangelistic efforts. In one mission no educational assignment is made unless with it goes a preaching assignment. Here is one way of materially increasing evangelistic resources in a short time. But whether in one way or another, (at the least by increased devotion on the part of the evangelists and Bible women, and at the most by a reorganization of Church and mission resources to meet a new and limitless opportunity,) evangelistic effort should be greatly augmented. In the last analysis what is done here will be done by men and women who feel led of God to preach the Gospel, who can say with Paul—"Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

Fifth, through all these efforts, whose consummation may take several years, there should be a singleness of aim. What is wanted in group ingathering—the Christianization of people who will by the fact of numbers be able to resist social dislocation and will continue to earn their living in their former fashion. There should be prayer for group ingathering, work for group ingathering and witness of group ingathering. The worker should visualize vividly the kind of ingathering he wants, and continually focus his attention on that. That kind of Church should be preached, should be pictured in illustration, should be prayed for. It is not an easy thing to do, for what the workers, both Indian and non-Indian, both paid and voluntary, know by first hand experience is the kind of a Church resulting from Christianization-by-Extraction. That is also what the people know to whom the message is taken. What is known by first hand is therefore to be laid aside—that the mission rears indigent children, that the convert must leave his village, that the mission must give work to its convert, that the mission must educate children, that becoming a Christian is taking on a new and kindlier over lord—; and what is known through books or visits is to be proclaimed,—that men and women in groups and by

common consent become disciples of Christ, live on where they have always lived, bear patiently any persecution which may befall, worship God together every evening, and give to the support of their minister. This will require constant and long continued effort, and will not be fully successful, until after dozens of groups have been won and established on the new pattern. Attention must be focussed on the goal, which is the establishment of a Church which can grow, a Church in living contact with its environment, a group movement Church.

Most tracts either explicitly or implicitly expect the "individual-becomes-a-Christian-and-separates-from-his-caste" type of conversion, so new tracts are to be written and published, tracts which state explicitly that the goal to be reached is a God-worshipping group living on in its ancestral surroundings. The casual witness of volunteers and the planned preaching of evangelists needs carefully to be trained. Too frequently the untrained lay witness in central station Churches is likely to say something suspiciously like this: "Why did I become a Christian? You threw me out. These people took me in, cared for me and gave me hundreds of rupees for the education of my children. If you ever get thrown out, remember the Christian Mission." We found a mission in Mid-India where the entire staff of evangelists were saying; "Look at your gurus. They are always taking from you,—sometimes as much as a whole rupee a year. Look at the True Guru Jesus Christ. He and his padres take nothing from you. They give you medicine and education and loving care, and give it absolutely free!" How could a self supporting Church start growing in answer to an appeal like that? The supervising minister will need to spend much time with his men listening to what they preach and correcting it when it proclaims or assumes Christianization-by-Extraction. He needs to teach them what to say, so that their message may be that Scriptural Word which will create sturdy, independent, growing and vital Christian Churches. To sum up

this long and important paragraph:—focus and continue to focus your attention, and the attention of your fellow workers, and the attention of all Christians, and the attention of the people of the approachable castes on the type of Church Growth, the type of conversion which is most desirable.

Sixth, it is our considered recommendation that Churches and Missions, in areas where group movements are possible, cease baptizing any individual who turns up alone in a mission station, who is likely to become a charge on the mission, or who will probably become a paid evangelist within a month or two, or who will be sent for training immediately, or who might move in to headquarters. As long as this recommendation is not heeded, the wrong pattern will continue to be laid down, even while proclaiming the right pattern. Furthermore the charge will be levelled against us that we make people Christian by offering them jobs. This is a rule which will doubtless have its exceptions, but they should be very rare exceptions. The recommendation is no basis for a slack program of evangelism. Let evangelism be redoubled but let it be guided by the goal desired. In this connection money loans to Christians should cease being made by the missionary. If the need for such loans is overwhelming, then some sort of cooperative effort should be made to meet the need. Where the missionary is the source of financial help in time of trouble, Christianity is rarely seen as a religion of self sacrifice.

Seventh, sometime following the adoption of this program, five to fifty families will be converted in a group. This group is the pearl of great price. It should be given the very best spiritual nurture, especially in the weeks and months following baptism. At the same time, for the sake of its soul, material care should be very sparingly given. Since the villages connected by marriage with these new Christian will be the most responsive people in the entire district, it is important that the most able soul winners, Indians or non-Indians, in the entire mission should be made available to work

in that locality. How many soul winners does your Church or mission, your College or Hospital have on its staff—men or women who are actually bringing lost souls to salvation? Such men or women should be transferred from any other work, no matter how necessary it may seem to be, to throw their weight in at the place where it will count. The original group will also be taught to witness and led out into witness. The results to be aimed at are: the enlargement of that original group by a series of other group movements; and the strengthening of the original group by practice in preaching the Christian faith, by the actual effort of winning relatives to the new life. A new group properly cared for will sometimes be more Christian in a year than many an old orphanage reared central station group, and will usually be far more potent evangelistically.

Eighth, the elements in that “proper spiritual nurture” spoken of above are numerous. Chief among them are the following:—

The habit of worship: Christians are worshippers of the True God. The rich meaningful worship of the Christian Church—a worship devoid of idols and full of ethical content—is the birth right of every Christian group. The custom of daily assembly for the worship of God is invaluable in the process of welding a group of people into a Christian Church. The worship ought to be such that illiterate people can understand it, and participate in it. This means worship in which memorized materials—prayers, statements of faith, commands, pledges, confessions—will be used again and again. All will know them and all will use them.

Daily worship involves a Church building. This may, at the beginning, be simply a sacred spot under a tree, fenced in to keep out the cattle, pigs and goats; or it may be a structure like the people’s own houses. Whatever it may be, it should be built by the people, understood to be theirs, used daily and honoured as the place of worship.

Honorary local leaders: Amongst the first duties of those to whom God has committed the spiritual care of a beginning group movement is that of discovering training, inspiring, and shepherding the honorary leaders of the local group. In addition to annual periods of training—a week to a month as people can be persuaded to give time—responsibility for the conducting of evening worship, for preparing enquirers for baptism, for walking in two to five miles to monthly Church meetings should be laid upon them. People learn by doing. The missionary cannot hope personally to teach 50,000 people; but he can teach the leaders of twice that number. We have been impressed both in Mid-India and elsewhere with the primary importance of training local leaders from among the people being saved. The new Christians should know that their own relatives are the leaders of their new religion.

A paid ministry: The best of the people being saved should be trained at some length as ministers. To be avoided as poison are such training centers—urban or rural—as make their graduates unwilling to go back amongst their own people, to live in a humble village fashion, to marry village girls, and in short to identify themselves with their people.

Planned giving to the Church: The Mass Movement Survey revealed that an average of Rs. 2/- per annum per family was a reasonable objective in most rural Churches. The habit of giving will not be established of itself. It must be taught, stressed and then put into force by putting men into the field who are dependent on the gifts of the people and who return to the people such service that giving seems reasonable.

Sometimes in small groups, especially when in a beginning movement all the persuasion of the older Church is needed to induce a group to try the Christian way, it will be necessary for the Mission to subsidize the village pastor, or for him to earn part of his living as a farmer, or a teacher, or in some other manner.

Christian Truth: Much Christian Truth will come normally in connection with worship. The daily assembly will provide a place for teaching the Bible to the adults. It is the adults who must be reached. It is beginning to be clear that teaching children who then go back into a community of unchanged adults is a waste of effort. A very effective school in any village is the unconscious life of the adult group. Where this is at variance with the conscious program of the school, the latter always suffers and too often is largely neutralized. Christian truth then is to be taught to the adults and the children together as they gather for the worship of God.

Christian Customs: Christian burial, Christian marriage, Christian festivals, Christian living, Christian symbols, Christian pictures, Christian greetings, Christian postures in worship, Christian cleanliness, Christian attitudes toward the castes, toward things unclean, toward women, toward children—all these need to be taught and lived in as large a measure as possible.

Christian Witness: The closing place is given to Christian Witness as one of the most important functions of the Christian group. To provide opportunity for the new Christian Group to witness to its faith is truly one of the most important aspects of spiritual nurture. The new convert is showered with words and greetings of contempt, blame and hate. "You have ruined yourself!" "You have gone bad". "You have betrayed us." "You have sent seven generations of ancestors to hell." "You have forsaken the true religion." These are amongst the milder common abuses which the new convert must hear. "What did you get out of it—besides a few filthy rupees?" is certain to be said to him. It is assumed in most places in Mid-India that only one in desperate circumstances would betray the faith and become a Christian. Even those who approve of the course taken, express their approval in damning terms. "Every one has to look after his stomach, of course. You did the best you could in hard circumstances," was

said to a recent convert in our hearing. The new Christian must be taught to bear his witness true and clear and unwavering in the midst of this intentional and unintentional misrepresentation. Teaching new Christians the faith and leading them to witness to it is an essential element of spiritual nurture.

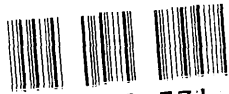
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Thus the group movement Church may be expected to grow, and multiply. It was out of living groups like the one described above, and out of Christian nurture similar to that herein depicted that the great Churches of India have arisen. The unique contribution of the Mass Movement Survey of Mid-India lies in the fact that here is dealt with for the first time the way in which a group movement can and should arise out of a Central Station Tradition.

Readers will by the years be divided into two parts—those who read this, give intellectual assent to it all, and then continue to practice the elements of the Central Station Tradition; and those who, lead by an inner urge, spare no pains to learn the group movement pattern, teach others the group movement pattern, and to work and pray that living group movement Churches—Churches which can grow—may come into being. To these latter readers this book is dedicated with faith that in Mid-India God wills the salvation of men to an extent which only the man of faith can hope to understand, and he not perfectly.

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DEC 1 '38	RENEWED
DEC 1 '38	Jane Sales
DEC 1 '38	E. Hansen
	Nimral Mirz
MAY 3 - 1939	Nimral Mirz

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